Systematic morality

/ W. Jevons

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SYSTEMATIC MORALITY,

OR

A Treatise

ON

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE

OF

HUMAN DUTY,

ON THE GROUNDS OF

NATURAL RELIGION.

BY WILLIAM JEVONS, JUN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

"Cum multa sint in philosophia et gravia et utilia, accurate copioseque a philosophis disputata, latissime patere videntur ea, quæ de officiis tradita ab illis et præcepta sunt. Nulla enim vitæ pars, neque publicis, neque privatis; neque forensibus, neque domesticis in rebus; neque si tecum agas quid, neque si cum altero contrahas, vacare officio potest: in eoque colendo sita vitæ est honestas omnis, et in negligendo turpitudo. Atque hæc quidem quæstio communis est omnium philosophorum: quis est enim, qui, nullis officii præceptis tradendis, philosophum se audeat dicere?" CICERO.

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TO THE REV. JAMES MYLNE,

Professor of Moral Philosophy,

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW,

TO WHOSE ENLIGHTENED INSTRUCTIONS IN PUBLIC
THE AUTHOR FEELS INDEBTED
FOR HIS FIRST SATISFACTORY VIEWS
IN MENTAL AND MORAL SCIENCE,
AND
WHOSE UNLOOKED-FOR KIND ATTENTIONS IN PRIVATE
HE STILL REMEMBERS WITH LIVELY GRATITUDE,
THIS WORK ON HUMAN DUTY
IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

5585

PREFACE.

Books of morality abound so much, that any addition to their number may seem superfluous. The ground, however, was not so completely preoccupied, as to leave room for no improvement; and something has hitherto been wanting in this department of literature, which it is hoped the present work may serve to supply. For though, in the numerous productions of our divines and essayists, we possess a rich store of moral instruction, conveyed, in many instances, with all the force of eloquence and all the graces of elegant diction; yet this instruction is so widely scattered, so loosely arranged, and so much mixed with extraneous matter, that it cannot easily be collected, nor presented to the mind with such distinctness as to make the desired impression; and notwithstanding the great and undoubted utility of writings of this description, there is a manifest want of some work which may condense their materials, and combine philosophical views and systematic arrangement with their practical and persuasive strain. Works, indeed,

there are, which profess to exhibit a complete system of ethics; but the number of these is surprisingly small, considering the importance and universally-interesting nature of the subject, and few even of this small number are calculated to answer the purpose just mentioned. Some are too exclusively theoretical: others too exclusively practical. Some have too much of a political character, and treat not so much of Morality, properly so called, as of Natural Jurisprudence; others are too deeply tinctured with theological opinions, which are acknowledged to confound, if they do not contradict, our reason. The most popular of the treatises on ethics, which are in possession of the British public, is that of Paley; and so long as good sense, clear reasoning, and perspicuous style are relished, so long it will maintain a high reputation, notwithstanding its inconsistent and too accommodating morality. To have entered into competition with that justly-admired work, would have seemed presumptuous; but a slight inspection of the contents of the present work will suffice to show, that it takes entirely different ground, and considers the subject of morals in another point of view. Paley's is a work of Casuistry, which, though it exercises the judgment with many interesting discussions on difficult points of duty, is not much calculated to mend the heart, or to inspire the love of virtue. The present work is more strictly a system of Morality, since it treats of the *Philosophy of Human Character*, investigates the sources of the several passions and affections, points out the aberrations to which they are subject, and lays down rules for their correction and governance.

Avoiding for the most part those minute discussions respecting the exact boundaries of right, in contracts, promises, oaths, and wills, which occupy so large a space in Paley's work, and which belong more properly to the Science of Natural Law; it aims to show wherein *right feeling*, as well as *right acting*, consists; and to recommend the inward virtue of the heart, by describing not only the *conduct* which it produces, but the *dispositions* which constitute its very essence. It aims, in short, to present, in a more condensed and systematic form, such moral instruction as is usually found in sermons and moral essays; and while the practical part, which constitutes by much the larger portion of the work, may prove acceptable to the general reader as a manual of duty for constant use, the author ventures to hope that the theoretical part may be found not uninteresting to the philosophical inquirer, as tending to disembarrass from their wonted confusion the several distinct questions which the theory of morals involves, and to illustrate the formation of human affections on those principles, in the application of which Locke and Hartley have already led the way.

ALFRED-STREET, LIVERPOOL,
JAN. 17, 1827.

ERRATA IN THE FIRST VOLUME.

P. 136, l. 23, after *just* insert *as*.
P. 185, l. 17, for *pity* read *piety*.
P. 186, note, for U read X.
P. 278, l. 13, dele *more*.
P. 321, l. 1, for *diplays* read *displays*.
P. 376, in the note, for *Œschines*, read *Æschines*.

CONTENTS

OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

Page

INTRODUCTION 1

BOOK I.

THEORETIC MORALITY 8

CHAPTER I.

OF THE ORIGIN OF MORAL SENTIMENTS AND OF HUMAN AFFECTIONS IN GENERAL 9

Introductory Remarks on the State of the Controversy, and on the Misapplication of the terms SELF-LOVE and SELFISH ..... *ibid*

Section i. Of the Pleasures and Pains of Sense 20

——— ii. Of the Love of Action and Excitement 24

——— iii. Of the Love of Novelty, and the Emotions of Surprise, Wonder, Astonishment, and Admiration.... 29

——— iv. Of the Pleasures of Memory 32

——— v. Of the Pleasures of Conception and Imagination 37

——— vi. Of the Pleasures of Intellect, or the Love of Knowledge 41

——— vii. Of the Principle of Imitation 44

——— viii. Of Wit and Ridicule..... 50

——— ix. Of the Sense of Sublimity 55

——— x. Of the Sense of Beauty 57

Page

Section xi. Of the Desire of Property 66
——— xii. Of the Desire of Society..... 70
——— xiii. Of the Desire of Esteem 72
——— xiv. Of the Desire of Power 76
——— xv. Of Gratitude and Resentment..... 79
——— xvi. Of the Affections of Kindred 80
——— xvii. Of Friendship and Antipathy 84
——— xviii. Of Patriotism 86
——— xix. Of Sympathy 89
——— xx. Of the Formation of Moral Sentiments 115

CHAPTER II.

Of the Criterion of Virtue 135

CHAPTER III.

Of the Grounds of Moral Obligation 157

BOOK II.

PRACTICAL MORALITY.

Preliminary Remarks 189

CHAPTER I.

General Duties of Action 193
Section i. Of Industry 194
——— ii. Of Beneficence or Usefulness 207
——— iii. Qualities or Habits conducive to the successful Discharge of Active Duty in general 225
1. Method ..... *ibid*
2. Perseverance 228
3. Enterprise 230
4. Despatch 232
5. Fixed Attention 233

CHAPTER II.

General Duties of Restraint. 235

Page.
Section i. Of Prudence 237
——— ii. Of Justice 250
——— iii. Of Veracity 256
——— iv. Of Moderation 265

CHAPTER III.

Duties relating to the Desire and Pursuit of Pleasure 270
Of Temperance and Chastity, or the proper regulation of the Appetites ..... *ibid*
Amusements, how far allowable 280
1. Sports 282
2. Games of Chance and Skill 283
3. Reading 284
4. Company 288
5. Theatrical Amusements 289
6. The Pursuits of Taste 291
Observations respecting the Pursuit of Pleasure in general. 293

CHAPTER IV.

Duties relating to the Desire and Pursuit of Wealth 296
Preliminary Remarks ..... *ibid*
The Love of Wealth criminal, when it employs the following means:
I. Violation of the Rights of others 298
1. By deeds of Violence or Outrage 300
2. By secret arts of Fraud and Dishonesty 301
3. By extortion or exorbitance in Commercial Dealings 304
II. Servile Conduct, Mean Compliances, False Professions, &c. 305
III. Gaming, Lotteries, Hazardous Speculations, &c... 307
The Love of Wealth chargeable with excess in the following cases:
I. When it renders the character selfish and interested . 310
II. When it occasions the neglect of higher duties and more important objects 311

Page

III. When money is sought and loved for its own sake . 313
Observations on the Contempt of Wealth 315

CHAPTER V.

Duties relating to the Desire and Pursuit of Reputation 317
Preliminary Remarks ..... *ibid*
I. Review of the diversities of this passion, according to the different qualifications which are the subject of praise or esteem 321
II. Review of its diversities, according to the manner in which it is manifested in the behaviour 327
Fear of Censure and Ridicule ..... *ibid*
Vanity 331
Pride 332
Conceit 338
Haughtiness 339
Arrogance 340
Assurance ..... *ibid*
Contempt 341
Modesty 343
Humility 345
Affectation 351
Hypocrisy 353
Ambition 356
Censoriousness 363
Charity 365
Envy 371
Emulation 374

Notes and Illustrations 377

SYSTEMATIC MORALITY.

INTRODUCTION.

MORALITY, or Moral Philosophy, is that science which treats of the government of human conduct. It points out certain modes of feeling, thinking, and acting, collectively expressed by the term Virtue, which are to be approved of and practised; and others, comprehended under the name of Vice, which are to be condemned and avoided. It aims to ascertain the true nature and origin of this distinction, and to establish on just grounds the obligation which it involves. It fully describes and accurately distinguishes these opposite modes of conduct; exhibits at large their respective tendencies; and urges every argument fitted to inspire a love of the one, and a hatred of the other. It inquires, moreover, into the sources of hu-

man error; investigates the causes which operate in the formation of character; reveals the subtleties and delusions of the human heart; and hence deduces further precepts concerning the means to be employed for cultivating and improving the moral principle.

It is a science which may confidently be pronounced the first in importance and utility of all the subjects of human knowledge; since its direct aim is to ascertain the surest means of happiness, and its truths are such as "come home to the business and bosom" of every individual of our race. Most other branches of knowledge are useful only for particular purposes and to particular classes: some can only be recommended as interesting objects of curiosity, as sources of rational amusement, or materials of agreeable and ornamental accomplishments. But this study is of universal importance. It relates to subjects in which all men, without exception, are deeply interested; to subjects which the daily business and intercourse of life is continually presenting to our attention, and respecting which we are every moment called upon both to judge and to act. To be ignorant, therefore, upon these subjects,

is to be wanting in the most indispensable of all acquirements. *Entire* ignorance, indeed, of this kind is scarcely possible in persons of mature age and sound understanding; for the great leading truths of morality are unavoidably forced upon the attention of all by the common maxims and ordinary experience of life. And hence it is, that to many persons the knowledge of moral duty appears so simple and obvious, that all instruction relating to it, that is merely practical, can consist only in the repetition of insipid truisms. But the moral knowledge of the generality of men will be found, when justly estimated, to need both much enlargement and much correction. Obscure, superficial, defective, and often grossly erroneous, are those notions of duty which men pick up by chance, and ill are they prepared for encountering the temptations of life, who are furnished with no better store of this important knowledge. There is a certain keen sensibility of conscience—a certain high-toned moral principle—a certain superiority to prevailing prejudices, and popular, but mistaken maxims—an ardent, heartfelt love of virtue, and a deeply-rooted abhorrence of vice, which is rarely met with among mankind, and which

cannot be expected but in those who have daily exercised their minds in the meditation of duty, and grown familiar with all the features and all the loveliness of virtue. Considered merely as a means of intellectual improvement, this study will be found of no small importance; for the power, which it tends to cultivate, of forming correct ideas on subjects most frequently occurring in books and in conversation, and of justly estimating the various characters which the intercourse of society or the page of history presents to our notice, is obviously one of the most useful of all mental accomplishments. The study of *morals*, indeed, is peculiarly the study of *man*, and is intimately connected with every science and every branch of literature, which relates to the faculties, the feelings, or the actions of men. It is founded upon, or rather it forms a part, and the most important part too, of the philosophy of the human mind; for without a knowledge of the laws which determine the formation and operation of the passions, it is evidently impossible to ascertain the best means of correcting and regulating them. It has a bearing also upon political science; for the statesman has to deal with men, and

unless he be well acquainted with the force of their prejudices and the prevailing motives of their actions, will be liable to fall into the grossest errors in his plans of government or legislation. It is allied more closely still to the studies of taste and criticism; for the same principles which explain the formation and nature of our moral sentiments, and of the several affections to which the rules of duty relate, serve also to explain the feelings of taste; and indeed virtue itself may be considered as taste exercised upon its highest objects. What is history, moreover, but a dry detail of facts and dates, unless we read it with minds prepared to mark the operation of human passions, and to regard with discriminating attention the various characters which pass in review before us? Whence arises all the charm of fiction and the drama, but from the faithful delineation of human character, which is equally the subject, though differently treated, of moral science? The moralist describes in general terms, and enters into a systematic detail of the several elements which constitute, under various combinations, the human character; while the novelist and dramatist select some particular passion, or some

particular feature of manners or character, which they illustrate, not by a formal and general description, but by examples which far more forcibly seize the attention and impress the mind. The study of morals is, therefore, the best preparative for duly relishing, or justly criticising these interesting productions; and let me add, that if they have hitherto been of doubtful tendency and questionable utility, it is only because they have usually been written, either with no view whatever to moral instruction, or without that light and guidance which moral science alone can furnish. Only let the inventive genius of fiction be subjected to the control and guidance of an enlightened morality, and it will prove an instrument of most powerful efficacy for the instruction and reformation of mankind.

Thus extensive is the range of moral science; thus close its connexion with all the most interesting of our studies and pursuits. Considered, therefore, I repeat it, merely as a branch of liberal study, as a means of improving the understanding and refining the taste, this science is entitled to high regard. But when we moreover consider how essential the knowledge of

duty is to its fulfilment, and how close and immediate the connexion between correct moral sentiments and a well-regulated conduct, it rises to a dignity and importance commensurate only with "*the vast concerns of an eternal scene.*"

The whole subject of moral science may be divided into three great parts. The first, under the title of *Theoretic Morality*, will include those inquiries which relate to the origin of our moral sentiments, and the nature and obligations of virtue in general. The second, under the title of *Practical Morality*, will comprehend the detail and description of all the particular dispositions, feelings, and modes of conduct, which respectively constitute virtue and vice, together with such representations of their several tendencies, as may serve to recommend the one and dissuade from the other. The last will treat of the means of cultivating and improving the moral principle, and will include that particular class of duties which are called instrumental duties. This part may be distinguished by the title of *Disciplinary Morality.*

BOOK I.

THEORETIC MORALITY.

PLAIN and simple as the subject of moral duty may at first appear, the theory of morals has nevertheless afforded an ample field for controversy; and no sooner have we entered upon the inquiries it involves, than we find ourselves perplexed amidst the variety of contending systems offered to our notice.* This diversity of opinion, however, will be found, on more attentive examination, to be generally more apparent than real; and a discriminating judgment will perceive, that the subject of dispute has not been always kept distinctly in view; that several questions of a very different nature have been confounded; and that writers have, in some instances, appeared to differ, only be-

* For a brief review of the leading theories of morals, see Belsham's Elements of Moral Philosophy.—Section 12—15.

cause they have regarded different subjects of inquiry, which they have not been sufficiently careful to distinguish. In the theory of morals there are three distinct questions, which, though often confounded, require a separate discussion. They are as follows:—

I. What is the origin of our moral sentiments?

II. What is the essential characteristic, or best criterion of virtue?

III. What is the nature and ground of moral obligation?

CHAP. I.

OF THE ORIGIN OF MORAL SENTIMENTS, AND OF HUMAN AFFECTIONS IN GENERAL.

What is the origin of our moral sentiments? or how, in other words, have we learned to make the distinction between right and wrong; to regard some actions and dispositions as worthy of approbation, others as deserving of blame? On this question there is a wide and real diversity of opinion among ethical writers; some maintaining that our moral sentiments

are *acquired* by the natural exercise of our powers of perception, under the varying influence of circumstances and education; while others contend that they are *instinctive* or *intuitive*, being either the self-evident dictates of untaught reason,* by which, independently of, and antecedently to all experience of their tendency, we are led to approve of virtue and to condemn vice; or the perceptions of a certain internal faculty called a moral sense,† which informs us of the moral character of actions in the same manner as the eye informs us of colours, the ear of sounds, or any other external sense of its appropriate objects. There is another class of writers who take a middle course, resolving our moral sentiments into some remoter principle, but expressly contending that that principle is such as cannot be itself resolved into self-love; I allude particularly to Mr. Hume and Dr. Adam Smith. The former of these maintains that there is implanted by nature in the human breast a principle of humanity or disinterested benevolence, which causes us to take delight in whatever tends to the happiness of mankind; that it is this prin-

* According to Clarke, Price, Beattie, Stewart, &c.

† According to Hutcheson, Reid, &c.

ciple which renders virtue an object of regard on account of its utility, and vice an object of abhorrence on account of its pernicious tendency; but he expressly maintains that this principle of humanity is an original, instinctive principle, which cannot be deduced from a selfish origin.* The latter ascribes the formation of our moral sentiments to a somewhat different process. He urges in objection to the doctrine of Hume, that the consideration of utility or beneficial tendency is not what *first* prompts us to approve of virtue, but an *after-thought* derived from mature reflection, and only serving to confirm the sentiments to which we have been led by a different principle.† That principle, according to him, is Sympathy, which, leading us to transfer ourselves in imagination into the situation of others, compels us to approve or blame their conduct according as we find ourselves disposed or averse to participate in the feelings from which it springs. But, in like manner with the writer first mentioned, he claims for this principle of sympathy the character of an original, instinctive

* Hume's Inquiry concerning the principles of Morals.—See note A at the end of the volume.

† See Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments.—Part iv. ch. 2.

principle, and denies the possibility of tracing our moral sentiments to any remoter source.*

The doctrine of a moral sense, or of instinctive or intuitive moral principles, is merely a modification of that doctrine of *innate ideas*, which has been so ably and successfully combated by Locke. The phrase, indeed, of *innate ideas* is now no longer used, and the manifest absurdity, which it seems to imply, of supposing that there are ideas of right and wrong in the mind of the new-born infant, is now distinctly disavowed, and was never, I imagine, the meaning or opinion even of those who did employ it. All that now appears to be contended for by the advocates of a moral sense, or instinct, so far as they have distinctly explained their meaning, is, that we are endowed by nature with certain *capacities* of moral feeling, by means of which, without the aid of instruction or previous experience, certain sentiments of approbation or disapprobation unavoidably arise, as soon as certain actions are presented to our attention. "It is not," says Dr. Brown, "contended, that we came into the

* See Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments.—Part vii. Sec. 3. ch. 1.

world with a knowledge of certain actions, which we are afterwards to approve or disapprove; for we enter into the world ignorant of every thing which is to happen in it: but that we came into existence *with certain susceptibilities of emotion*, in consequence of which it will be impossible for us, in after-life, but for the influence of counteracting circumstances, momentary or permanent, not to be pleased with the contemplation of certain actions, *as soon as they have become fully known to us*, and not to have feelings of disgust on the contemplation of certain other actions."* The existence of some original susceptibilities of emotion has never, I imagine, been denied. Without this, it is evident, education and association would be altogether insufficient to account for the formation of our moral sentiments; for were there nothing *originally and by nature* pleasurable or painful, it is obvious that nothing could be so by *association;* and it is only, as an eminent living writer justly observes, "it is only by co-operating with the natural principles of the mind, that education produces its

* Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind, by the late Thomas Brown, M. D.—Vol. iii. p. 606.

effects."* In combating the doctrine of instinctive or intuitive moral principles, it has been customary with the advocates of the opposite doctrine to bring forward, with perhaps too little caution, the diversities and inconsistencies which may be found in the moral sentiments of different ages, countries, and classes, in order to shew the want of that uniformity which we should reasonably expect in an instinctive principle. Hence they have been charged by their opponents with representing the distinction between right and wrong as altogether arbitrary and conventional, so that what is virtue in one age or country, may be vice in another. Such a doctrine, if indeed it has ever been maintained, is certainly as remote from truth, as it is dangerous in its tendency. With no appearance of reason can it be affirmed that our notions of right and wrong are to this extent factitious; for however widely mankind may differ on some particular points, a general and total disagreement in their moral sentiments has never yet been witnessed, and cannot even be imagined possible. Particular actions may be here and there allowed, which

* Stewart's Outlines of Moral Philosophy.—Part ii. ch. 1. Sec. vi. § 174.

are at variance with our notions of justice or humanity; but no circumstances of society can be supposed, no means of education can be contrived, which will have power to render all which these terms designate, hateful, and all which the contrary terms express, approved and honoured. There is, and ever must be, a general uniformity in the moral sentiments of men, which utterly forbids the supposition that they are the mere result of arbitrary ordinance or casual prescription, and compels the belief that there must be some universally-operating principle, which, independently of the influence of education, leads us necessarily to approve of virtue and condemn vice. What, then, is this principle? Is it any thing more than that simple capacity of corporeal pleasure and pain, which is essential to our nature as sentient beings? This is the disputed question, the discussion of which now claims our attention; and if it can be shewn that from this source alone, according to the acknowledged laws of the human mind, our moral sentiments *may be* deduced, no other argument will then be wanted to overthrow at once whatever systems are erected on the needless hypothesis of a moral sense or instinct. For it is only by the

appeal to ignorance that those systems can be defended; and if that appeal can be answered in the way which I propose, they must fall, of course, by their own weight. In order, however, to prosecute with success this analysis of our moral sentiments, it will be expedient to extend the investigation to the whole train of human affections, including even those which belong to the province of Taste. They are all so closely allied together, they partake so much of a common nature, and mutually throw so much light on one another, that they cannot well be understood or treated of separately. This general analysis of human affections is required, indeed, not merely with a view to the controversy of which I have been speaking, but as a necessary preparative for the ensuing practical inquiries; for without a just knowledge of the nature and laws of human affections, it is impossible to lay down judicious practical rules for their government and direction. It is, therefore, a subject which justly claims a place in this theoretic branch of moral science.

Before, however, entering upon this analysis, I would endeavour to obviate a certain misap-

prehension, to which the doctrine I shall advance will be liable. If it be true that the pleasures and pains of sense are the source from which all our desires and affections flow, this necessarily implies that they are all deducible from a *selfish* origin, or may be said, in a certain sense, to be founded in *self-love.* But these terms, be it carefully observed, when used in this connexion, have a different import from that offensive signification which they sometimes bear. The term *self-love* being often used in contradistinction to benevolence, and *selfish* being the epithet by which we designate that cold, calculating, interested character, which always looks to its own advantage, and is insensible to all the generous feelings of sympathy, gratitude, and kind affection, the same invidious sense has been unfortunately attached to these terms in their application to the present subject, and great indignation has accordingly been expressed against the attempt to deduce the affections of the human mind from self-love, as if this were to deny the reality of any disinterested feelings, and to represent mankind as being always actuated by a cold regard to individual happiness. The

doctrine thus interpreted would certainly deserve that indignation which it has provoked, and would contradict the testimony of consciousness in every well-disposed and well-principled mind. We admire actions of exalted virtue, and condemn deeds of atrocity or baseness, from a certain instantaneous impulse, which evidently leaves no room for far-fetched calculations of their consequences to ourselves. We scorn the very thought of an act of meanness, even where it would most effectually serve our interest; and we feel that we love our parents, our children, our friends, with an affection which has nothing in it of a cold and calculating character. Be it, however, observed, that it is one thing to assert that the thought of self is always uppermost in the minds of men, even when they appear to be actuated by the most disinterested and elevated affections; and quite another thing to say that such affections are remotely derived from a selfish origin. The former revolting doctrine, though doubtless maintained by some ethical writers, among whom may be reckoned Hobbes, Mandeville, and Rochefoucauld, is by no means to be imputed to the system advanced in the following

pages, as will plainly appear in the course of the inquiry.*

In following out the analysis of human affections, I shall observe the following order:— First, I shall enumerate and describe the *primary* affections, from those lowest desires, called Appetites, which are common to man with the brutes, and which arise from the immediate pleasures and pains of sense, to those more refined, but equally original feelings, which arise from the exercise of the higher faculties. The course of this investigation will gradually lead to the consideration of those feelings or affections which may be called *derived* or *secondary*, because created by the *remoter* influence of good and evil, and consisting chiefly in the permanent desire and continued pursuit of whatever things are instrumental to the gratification of our primary desires. Next will succeed the analysis of the Affections, peculiarly so called, or of that class of associated feelings of which, not *things*, but *persons* are the objects; and this will lead, by

* Note B.

an easy transition, to the analysis of our Moral Sentiments.

SECTION I.

OF THE PLEASURES AND PAINS OF SENSE.

The original objects of human desire and aversion are corporeal pleasure and pain. If we ascend, indeed, to the very first sources of human actions, we shall arrive at such as are entirely independent of desire or volition, being the result merely of physical organization. Physiology informs us that the first actions of all animals are occasioned solely by that property of living bodies which is termed Irritability. The same principle, whatever it be, which causes the lungs to heave, the heart to beat, the blood to circulate, and the stomach to digest, operates also in the first instance upon those parts of the frame which afterwards become subject to the will. By this it is, that the new-born infant utters its touching cries, and sucks and swallows its food, without the least previous conception of the effects of these actions, still less of the complicated process by which they are performed. By this it is, that all its random gestures are at first occasioned, till memory

creates determinate desires, and directs those desires to the means of obtaining their gratification. The same or a similar principle continues to operate in various instances even to the latest period of life; for to what, but the hidden mechanism of our frame, must we ascribe the several external signs or manifestations of the passions—the tears of sorrow, the laughter of mirth, the blushes of shame, and the pallid countenance and trembling limbs of fear? Leaving, however, to physiologists the explanation of these phenomena, and commencing the investigation where mind and its affections commence, we may safely allege, that the only affections originally manifested in our nature are those which regard the pleasures and pains of sense. The new-born infant is evidently susceptible of no other desires or affections than those which are excited by his more immediate and acute sensations, as by hunger and thirst, by warmth and cold, by pain or pleasure of whatever kind, arising either from external impressions, or the state of his internal frame. At this earliest period of life we can discover none of those elevated and disinterested feelings, no sign of that humanity, of that sympathy, or of that moral sense, which have been so confi-

dently pronounced to be the immediate gift of nature. The infant is obviously a purely *selfish* being, if that epithet can with propriety be applied to one whose attention is entirely engrossed by his own wants and feelings. And as the introduction of those more elevated affections which afterwards appear, is evidently accomplished in a very gradual way, this alone affords a presumption, that they are not the immediate endowments of nature, but only the effect of increasing years and growing experience, operating upon those faculties which are obviously coeval with our birth. On mere presumption, however, we need not rest; for it will appear, I trust, in the course of the inquiry, that from the animal pleasures and pains of infancy, and from the simple desires and aversions which they excite, all the various train of our subsequent passions, affections, tastes and sentiments may, with little difficulty, be deduced.

The pleasures and pains of sense, though greatly modified in after-life, continue to exercise through every period a very powerful influence on human conduct. They create that lowest class of animal wants and inclinations,

called Appetites, which we feel in common with the brutes. It is usual with ethical writers to enumerate three of these, namely—Hunger, Thirst, and the Sexual Appetite; which are distinguished, they observe, by the following characteristics: that "they take their rise from the body, and are common to us with the brutes;" that "they are not constant, but occasional;" and that "they are accompanied with an uneasy sensation, which is strong or weak, in proportion to the strength or weakness of the appetite."* There are, however, other animal desires, which, though not usually termed Appetites, belong obviously to the same class: I allude more particularly to that inclination for rest and sleep which is induced by fatigue, and to those desires or aversions which are excited by the variations of external warmth and cold. In short, whatever desires or aversions arise from the more acute sensations of corporeal pleasure or pain, prompting us to seek what is salutary, and to avoid what is hurtful to the animal frame, may be included in this lowest class of human or animal affections.

* Stewart's Outlines of Moral Philosophy.—Part ii. ch. 1, Sec. 2.—Reid's Essays on the Active Powers.—Essay iii. Part ii. ch. 1.

SECTION II.

OF THE LOVE OF ACTION AND EXCITEMENT.

The gratifications of Appetite, though to them alone is applied the epithet *sensual*, are not the only pleasures which belong to the senses. Each sense has its own appropriate gratification, though their gratifications are not all equally indispensable, nor equally acute. The human infant, as already observed, is at first susceptible only of the grosser animal feelings,—of the wants and enjoyments of the palate, and of those feelings, whether of pleasure or pain, which belong to no one sense in particular, but to the general sensibility of the whole bodily frame. But when his senses of sight, hearing, and touch become more mature, and his attention is directed more to external objects, new sources of enjoyment are then opened to him in the mere exercise of these improved faculties. Strong light and glaring colours delight his eye, and lively sounds his ear; not that they impart to him any sensation of acute pleasure, like that which consists in the agreeable flavour of his food, but merely, it would seem, by reason of that gentle excitement, and that livelier sense of existence which

they impart. His delight in handling and moving whatever objects are within his reach and power, and in exerting his little strength for no other purpose than to make a noise, is clearly a gratification of this kind, consisting solely in the pleasure which is annexed by nature to the mere exercise of the faculties. To call this *sensual* pleasure, would seem unusual and unwarrantable language; yet these are certainly as much the appropriate enjoyments of the several senses above mentioned, as agreeable flavours are the appropriate enjoyments of the sense of taste, or agreeable odours of the sense of smell. To all animals a state of inaction, except under a sense of fatigue, appears to be irksome; and the mere exertion of the limbs, so long as it is unattended with labour, is in itself a source of pleasure, independently of any other object; of which the sportive gestures and "gratuitous activity" of all young animals afford abundant proof. This class of pleasures, which may be called the pleasures of Action and Excitement, though not so indispensable as the gratifications of Appetite, nor ever regarded with such intense desire, constitute, nevertheless, a large part of the occupation and enjoyment of early life, and are the chief

ingredient in many of the amusements of our later years; for what is it, but the thirst for action and excitement, which prompts to the rough sports of boyhood, and gives their charm to those athletic exercises and diversions of the field, which form the frequent entertainment of manhood?

But further—If we are so constituted by nature as to derive pleasure from the exercise of our *corporeal* powers, it is not surprising, for it is in fact a necessary consequence, that the exercise of our *mental* faculties should be attended with a similar gratification. Between *Sense* and *Intellect* it is impossible to draw a distinct line of separation. The exercise of observation by the eye and ear is, in some sense, an exercise of the mind; since it implies the power of discrimination and comparison, which are truly mental operations. The process of *learning to see* is one which requires the constant exercise of memory and judgment; for the perceptions of distance, bulk, and tangible properties by the eye are not, as is now universally acknowledged, the original perceptions of that sense, but the associated knowledge which it has acquired under the tuition of Touch. The

new-born infant, though endowed with all the organs of sense, is incapable even of that simplest excitement which arises from the observation of external objects. We are apt to expect that the little stranger, surrounded as he is by so many novel objects, should feel immediate wonder and interest in all that he beholds. But we forget that his attention has not yet extended beyond his more acute and immediate feelings; that the sensations conveyed by his eye and ear are all as yet confused and indistinct; and that it is only by slow degrees that he even learns to recognise by means of those sensations the objects of his earliest and most pressing wants. The very power, therefore, of observing external objects, implies a certain developement of mind, and those pleasures of excitement which have been already mentioned, partake as much of the nature of mental as of sensible pleasures. Indeed, the mental faculties, in their first exercise, are nothing more than certain modes or necessary results of sensation; and even when they are employed on subjects apparently the most remote from sense, a close analysis of their operations will still shew their derivation from that humble source. Admitting this, we may easily

understand why the laws of sense are the laws also to a certain extent of intellect; and why the *easy* exercise which is gratifying to the corporeal faculties, is in like manner gratifying to those of the mind. Whatever stimulates attention and attracts observation; whatever imparts new ideas, or excites a train of thought; whatever recalls former perceptions with distinctness to the memory, or opens a field in which imagination may range at large, must naturally be a source of pleasure, because it is action and excitement that constitute our very life, and if to live be grateful, these must necessarily be grateful in the same degree. These principles afford an easy explanation of a large proportion of those pleasures which are called the pleasures of Taste or Imagination, which many writers have very needlessly represented as arising from several distinct faculties or internal senses. The subject of Taste is so nearly allied to that of Ethics, and the principles of both are so much the same, that it will not be at all irrelevant to our subject, to include these pleasures in the present analysis of human affections.

SECTION III.

OF THE LOVE OF NOVELTY, AND THE EMOTIONS OF SURPRISE, WONDER, ASTONISHMENT, AND ADMIRATION.

The pleasures of action and excitement are subject to this peculiar law, that they require for their maintenance a *change of objects.* This seems to be partly the result of physical causes; for long-continued action of one kind fatigues the member or organ employed in that action, and renders a change in the mode of action desirable on that account. And it is remarked moreover by physiologists as a law of our corporeal frame, that any sensation which is long continued, becomes by degress less vivid, and less attracts the attention of the mind.

But independently of physical causes, the pleasures of excitement, considered in themselves, suggest a sufficient explanation of the passion for novelty. As it is solely by means of being actively employed about forms and colours and sounds, that the eye and ear are instruments of pleasure, a variety of objects, by increasing that employment, must of course enlarge their sphere of pleasure. A new object, by the very circumstance of its presenting different sensa-

tions from those which are now familiar, forcibly arrests the attention, and furnishes an agreeable excitement. There is no necessity, therefore, for supposing, according to the doctrine of some, the existence of a distinct internal sense or faculty, to account for the pleasure of novelty.

This awakened attention, or excited state of mind, constitutes, under certain modifications, the kindred emotions of Surprise, Wonder, Astonishment and Admiration, which, on account of their important influence in modifying all our more determinate passions, demand a share of our attention. *Surprise* is the emotion excited by what is new and unexpected simply. It should be observed, however, that the term is seldom applied except to the higher degrees of this emotion, when something has happened to us peculiarly strange, and sudden, and contrary to all previous expectation. Such events, by the very circumstance of their strangeness and suddenness, present a very powerful excitement to the mind, and furnish, therefore, if they be not attended by any apprehension of evil, a very lively feeling of delight. That more moderate excitement which is produced

by objects or events that are simply new, is the same in kind, though inferior in degree. If to the circumstance of novelty be added something of intricacy or unaccountableness, the emotion amounts to what is called *Wonder*, or *Amazement*, which consists in the active employment of the thoughts in various conjectures respecting the cause or nature of the inexplicable object. If the unwonted object be, at the same time, unusually vast or extensive, so as to exceed the powers of comprehension, it raises the emotion to the pitch of *Astonishment*, which arises from the mind's endeavouring to grasp the idea of the object in all its magnitude, but finding it beyond the utmost stretch of its capacity. *Admiration* is only that modification of the same emotion, which is produced, not by what is merely extraordinary, but by extraordinary degrees of something in itself accounted excellent or valuable. These emotions are all in themselves pleasing, by reason of the stimulus which they present to the attention, and the vigorous exercise which they afford to the faculties But this is to be understood only when the objects of these emotions are in themselves regarded without dislike or fear; for otherwise the adventitious feelings of surprise or astonishment

which they excite, will only serve to aggravate their disagreeable effect. For these emotions consist, as I have observed, merely in the excitation of the thoughts and attention; and when the objects of thought and attention create, by their intrinsic qualities, feelings of their own, whether of desire or aversion, of hope or fear, the effect of surprise and astonishment can only be to give these feelings additional force. And it is owing in general to this accessory impulse, that the passions acquire their utmost energy, and display themselves in those wild paroxysms which spurn the government of reason.

SECTION IV.

OF THE PLEASURES OF MEMORY.

That there is a pleasure, to a certain extent, in the mere exercise of the Memory, is a fact familiar to every one's experience. Any object, however indifferent in itself, around which a multitude of associations are accumulated, becomes, for that sole reason, interesting to us. Hence, in a great measure, arises the pleasure which we feel in revisiting, after long absence, the scenes of our early days, which call up to

our remembrance a variety of circumstances and events in the history of our past lives. It is by no means necessary to our pleasure, that these remembered circumstances or events should have been in themselves agreeable, since the remembrance of them is often pleasing in cases where they have been indifferent, or even painful. The pleasure, in most instances, arises mainly from the mere multiplicity of recollections which the scene calls up into our minds; and this, it is worthy of being remarked, is perhaps the true foundation of the opinion which many entertain of the peculiar happiness of their youthful days. The pleasure which they feel at the present moment from this exercise of memory, they incautiously ascribe to the nature of the things remembered, and thus create in their fancy a picture of happiness by no means corresponding with what was actually enjoyed. Another instance of the pleasures of memory may be noticed in that increased gratification which we find in contemplating an extensive prospect, after having travelled over the country, and become acquainted, by a nearer inspection, with the various objects it presents, compared with what we felt when the country and the prospect were alto-

gether new. However great may be our admiration on first gazing at the landscape, how much more exquisite is our pleasure, when we can recognise in the distance the mountain we have climbed; when we can trace the windings of the road we have travelled; when we can discern the distant spire of the town or village we have visited, or descry the far-off solitary inn which afforded us refreshment on our way. The pleasure of such recognitions is not to be accounted for by any previous enjoyment derived from the objects recognised, but appears to consist solely in the mere act of recognition itself. I hardly need observe that the exercise of memory is agreeable only when it is *easy*. Whenever an effort is required to recall a lost idea, that effort in itself is painful; though it may lead to pleasure, by leading to success. It is only when the remembered idea occurs spontaneously, and without any effort of thought to recover it, that the exercise of memory is a source of gratification.

But here presents itself an apparent inconsistency, which requires some explanation, between the pleasures of memory and those of novelty. How is it that pleasure should flow

from such directly opposite sources?—that objects should be alike agreeable by being *familiar* and by being *new?* The apparent inconsistency will be at once removed by observing that in each case the pleasure arises from the exercise of the faculties, and that the difference is only in the mode of exercise; the power of *observation* being employed in the one case, and the power of *memory* in the other. A new object forcibly arrests the attention, and furnishes to the mind an agreeable employment in perusing it through all its features, and noting its peculiarities. A familiar object interests and pleases in a different way, by recalling to the mind a multitude of recollections. But it is to be observed, that novelty of a certain kind is necessary to the existence even of the pleasures of memory. An object which is perpetually before our eyes, attracts no attention, and excites no train of thought. It is only when an object has been once familiar, and then for a time withdrawn from observation, that it is capable of awakening, by its re-appearance, that train of associated ideas which alone can render it interesting. Hence it is that an attachment to any particular spot is seldom strongly felt, till after a temporary

absence; that the feeling of patriotism is in none so ardent, as in those who are just restored to their country after years of travel or exile in a foreign land; and that the meeting of friends, after long separation, is always so peculiarly delightful. The pleasures of novelty are necessarily short-lived; for when our observation has been applied to all the parts of the novel object, and all its peculiarities have been remarked, it then possesses nothing more to attract attention, and is consequently regarded with indifference. The pleasures of memory, on the contrary, are increased and strengthened by length of time, because the longer we have been conversant with any scene or object, the greater, of course, is the number of associations which are collected around it. Hence it is that the passion for novelty, which so strongly prevails in early life, is gradually weakened by the increasing resources which are found in the pleasures of memory, till in age we become entirely averse to change, and strongly attached to the scenes, pursuits, and objects with which we have been long familiar.

SECTION V.

OF THE PLEASURES OF CONCEPTION AND IMAGINATION.

The powers of Conception and Imagination being only modifications of Memory, it is natural that their exercise should be equally a source of pleasure. Memory, Conception, and Imagination, all consist in the faint reproduction of former sensations by other means than by the presence of the objects which originally imparted them. Their only difference consists in this, that when this reproduction takes place in that precise order or combination in which the sensations originally occurred, or with express reference to some particular period of past time, we call it Memory; whereas, when past experience only furnishes, as it were, the materials with which the mind forms combinations of its own, we ascribe the process to Conception or Imagination. A moment's consideration will suffice to show how very important a part this faculty acts in the generation of human affections. What is it which furnishes the chief occupation of the mind, but the train of conceptions which are continually passing through it in quick succession? What is it which constitutes the motive to every action, and must

necessarily precede every action, but a conception of some good to be obtained, or some evil to be avoided by its performance? What is it which supplies the impulse, and gives direction to the passions, but the lively colouring which imagination lends to all our views of present, or of distant objects. The future, being all unknown, can influence us only by means of the conceptions which we form respecting it; yet it is the future, far more than the present or the past, which engages our thoughts, and operates upon our conduct. Our actual *sensations* engage our attention only on those infrequent occasions when they amount to positive pleasure or pain, or come recommended by the charm of novelty; and the objects endeared, or rendered hateful to us by *memory*, as having been actually the means of benefit or injury to us, are comparatively few, because our experience itself has been extremely limited. But the range of *imagination* is boundless, its activity is incessant, and the objects which it clothes with the colours, or endows with the capabilities of good or evil, are infinite. In the whole compass, therefore, of mental and moral science, there is nothing so much entitled to our attention as the opera-

tion of this faculty, whose influence is so constantly and powerfully exerted on our conduct, our feelings, and our happiness. But the mere exercise of this faculty, independently of any thing in the objects about which it is concerned, is a source of a large proportion of our pleasures, and it is to its influence in this way that I wish to direct, in the first place, the attention of my readers. Whatever stimulates the fancy, and fills the mind with a crowd of ideas, must naturally be agreeable on the principles which have been already stated. Hence arises the lively interest which we feel in seeing distinguished persons, or in visiting the scenes of memorable transactions. For why does the scholar tread with veneration and delight the classic soil of Rome or Athens, but because the reality of the scenes there presented to his view, gives greater force and distinctness to his conceptions of those illustrious men, whose presence once adorned them, and whose writings, characters, or achievements have oft employed his admiring meditations?* Why is it that the multitude run with such eagerness to gaze upon the hero whose name and deeds have resounded through the world, but because

* See Note C.

in his person are centred so many interesting associations. A king, in himself, may be a personage of very ordinary character, who, were he placed in an humbler sphere of life, would be the object of no particular attention: but the mere circumstance of his being so often named in our hearing, and so often made the subject of our thoughts;—the mere circumstance of his being looked upon as the representative of a nation, and of his bringing by this means more distinctly to our minds the great and various ideas which its name involves,—this alone invests his person with an interest which every beholder must confess, and even they who affect to be superior to the feeling, may safely be challenged to declare that they regard him with the same indifference as an ordinary man. On the same principles we may explain the charm of fiction, which evidently arises from the active employment it affords to the imagination, on the most interesting of all subjects, the actions and passions of men. In all the pleasures of Taste, this faculty plays so important a part, that with great propriety they have been called the pleasures of Imagination. And that they arise in a great degree from the mere *exercise* which

beautiful or sublime objects afford to the fancy, has been so fully shewn by a living author, who has written expressly on the subject, that I shall content myself with referring my readers to his elegant work.* He justly, indeed, maintains that the feelings of sublimity and beauty consist not *solely* in the exercise of the imagination; but that besides the train of thought in which they partly consist, there is also some simple emotion which excites that train, and imparts to it throughout a peculiar character. The nature of this emotion will be a subject of future consideration.

SECTION VI.

OF THE PLEASURES OF INTELLECT, OR THE LOVE OF KNOWLEDGE.

By the term Intellect I mean to designate the powers of Judgment and Reasoning; and though it may seem unusual language to speak of the pleasures of judgment and reasoning, yet upon a little consideration it will soon appear, that the exercise of these higher faculties is attended with pleasure, not less than the exercise of the lower. Judgment, indeed, in its ear-

* See Alison's Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste.—Essay I.

liest stage, is only another name for the act of Perception; and it might easily be shewn that, in its higher operations, it merely consists in collecting the general result of a number of perceptions. Reasoning, also, is only a peculiar modification of judgment, or judgment exercised with regard to those objects which are beyond the reach of direct observation, and consists chiefly in forming presumptions or inferences from analogy, or in analysing general propositions of acknowledged truth, in order to shew the particular truths which they necessarily involve. The exercise of both these faculties is implied in the pursuit of knowledge, the desire of which is generally ranked among the number of our natural propensities. It manifests itself at a very early period in that principle of Curiosity, which is so active in children, as evinced by those incessant inquiries which every occasion calls forth, and by that officious, meddling propensity, which, though we often chide it as troublesome, is no other than the natural result of their eagerness to try their unknown powers, and to gain information which *to them* is new and interesting. In later life we see its influence extensively displayed in that thirst for news, that love of talk and scandal, and that

restless inquisitiveness about the affairs of others, which furnish so much employment to the triflers of our species, and to the busy in their hours of trifling. And precisely the same principle it is, though under better guidance and direction, which inspires the ardour of the student or philosopher, who negligent of ease, recreation, or health, pursues his more dignified and useful researches into the mysteries of nature, or the transactions of antiquity. The labour in this case submitted to, may not be in itself agreeable; but the anticipation of its delightful result, of those enlarged views, and accurate conceptions, and increased store of ideas, to which it leads, beguiles and sweetens it; just as the toilsome steep is climbed with eagerness, not because we delight in the labour of the ascent, but for the sake of the wide and beauteous prospect with which we expect to feast our eyes at the summit. All the more refined amusements of cultivated minds, such as books, conversation, travel; and many even of our less useful recreations, such as cards and games of skill, derive their principal charm from the easy exercise which they afford to the judging and reasoning powers.

The foregoing principles are evidently of very extensive application, and afford a sufficient explanation of a large proportion of our feelings and propensities. That explanation has already been given with respect to such of our feelings or propensities as seemed proper for exemplifying the exercise or gratification of our several faculties singly considered. But there are others which, being more complex in their nature, and springing from more various sources, remain yet to be enumerated and described.

SECTION VII.

OF THE PRINCIPLE OF IMITATION.

The principle of Imitation may be considered in two points of view; as an active propensity, and as the source of a certain class of quiescent pleasures.

As an active propensity, it appears to operate at a very early period; for almost the first attempts at action in the child, are attempts to imitate the words or gestures of those around him; and all his most delightful sports are sports of mimickry. Nor does its influence

cease in later years; for what is it, but the propensity to imitate, which renders general example so contagious, and makes it so difficult to avoid those peculiarities of speech and manners which prevail among those with whom we constantly associate? By some writers, accordingly, it has been represented as an instinctive principle,* though it admits of very easy and satisfactory explanation on other grounds. It is obvious that every voluntary action must necessarily be preceded by a conception of its mode and object. The very act of volition implies an idea of the action to be performed, and the course of our actions entirely depends upon what we previously conceive. The child, by that original principle of his nature which has been already repeatedly mentioned, delights to be in action. But what shall determine his mode of action, when no object in itself desirable is offered to his notice, and when action for its own sake is his only aim?—What conceptions so likely, in this case, to present themselves, to give direction to his restless energies, as the conceptions of those actions which he most frequently witnesses in those around him? Is it wonderful

* See Reid's Essays on the Powers of the Human Mind.—Vol. iii. p. 132, 8vo. Ed. Stewart's Outlines of Moral Philosophy.—p. 71, 4th Ed.

that his choice should fix upon a mode of action which is familiar to his thoughts, in preference to one which is altogether strange? What more natural, then, than that children should mimick in their little sports those actions of their elders which are often performed in their presence, or those operations of the artisan which they have observed with such lively wonder and delight?—But this is not the only cause of the tendency to imitation.—Children soon become sensible of the superiority which years confer. They naturally look up to their elders with respect, and imagine not that there is any thing beyond their knowledge or their power. Having heard that they shall themselves be one time men, they long for the arrival of this happy period, and delight to anticipate in their imaginations the time when they shall be able to do and be what they now admire so much. To mimick the actions and assume the airs of their elders, is therefore delightful, because it seems to give them a foretaste of this imagined happiness, and invests them in their own idea with all the consequence and dignity of men. Whoever is at all conversant with children, must frequently have remarked, how much it gratifies the elder children of a

family to be intrusted with the care of the younger, and with what amusing airs of consequence they exercise their little power. It requires surely no instinctive principle to account for this very natural pride; and yet it is the same feeling which constitutes in many other instances the pleasure of puerile imitation.

The former part of this explanation will evidently apply to the case where the propensity to imitate is manifested in adults. In this case also it is true that conception must always precede action; and as those modes of speech and behaviour which we are constantly hearing or observing, must at length be rendered so familiar to the memory as to occur to our minds more readily than any other, it is not wonderful that we should insensibly adopt them, however strange they may have appeared to us at first.

The principle of Imitation, considered as a source of passive pleasure, is an important constituent of the pleasures of taste; and in this view may perhaps be more properly termed the Love of Resemblance. The mere perception of resemblance is generally pleasing, and the pleasure appears to consist in that easy

exercise of the faculties which the act of comparison implies. The delight which children take in toys which bear a resemblance to animals and other objects with which they are familiar, is a fact obvious to every one; and if the mere exercise of the faculties be allowed to be a natural source of pleasure, it will not be difficult to understand why they should be gratified by being strongly reminded of objects which they have formerly beheld with interest, and in comparing through all its parts the copy with the original. The same principle which constitutes in this instance the gratification of the child, is the source also of the pleasure which is derived in maturity from the productions of the Imitative Arts; with this difference, that the child is pleased with a very rude resemblance, because his observation is not sufficiently accurate to perceive the points wherein the likeness fails, while the more improved perceptions of manhood require for their gratification a closer similarity. Much, however, of the charm of the imitative arts arises from the exercise of imagination, rather than from that of observation and comparison. A skilful painter or sculptor suggests far more than he directly represents, and this power of

suggestion constitutes a kind of excellence which is justly considered superior to perfect exactness of resemblance.

It is this principle also which renders Uniformity pleasing. The resemblance of the corresponding parts of a building leads to a pleasing exercise of comparison, and assists the mind in comprehending it as a whole.

From the same source is derived the pleasure which is felt in Metaphors, Similes, Allegories, Fables, and Imagery of every kind. The analogies which form the subject of these figures, afford an entertaining employment to the fancy in glancing from the principal to the illustrative idea, and in noting all their points of similarity. They seem to multiply our ideas, by multiplying in our minds their relations with one another, and increase our interest in any subject of reflection by collecting around it an increased number of associations. They serve also, in some cases, to assist our conceptions; for an abstruse idea, which can hardly be expressed in general terms, or which, if so expressed, is but imperfectly understood,

assumes a more palpable form, and appears to be made perfectly plain, when illustrated by a metaphor.*

SECTION VIII.

OF WIT AND RIDICULE.

The emotion of Laughter is represented by Hobbes to consist in a feeling of pride or triumph, arising from the perception of some absurdity in another, which causes us to draw a comparison advantageous to ourselves. "Sudden glory," he says, "is the passion which maketh those grimaces called Laughter; and is caused either by some sudden act of their own which pleaseth them, or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves."† In this account there is certainly some truth; but it is evidently partial and incomplete, inasmuch as it is applicable only to that laughter of which persons are the objects, and as it is not every instance of our own perceived superiority that excites this emotion.

* See Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, Lecture xiv.

† Leviathan, p. 27.

Laughter, we know, is often excited by jests or strokes of wit, where, persons not being at all concerned, that feeling of pride or triumph of which Hobbes speaks, cannot possibly have place. The cause of the emotion in this case must first be ascertained, before we can fully understand it in the case where persons are its objects.

The perception of resemblance is in itself, as we have seen, a source of pleasure; but this pleasure is greatly enhanced when accompanied by *surprise.* Hence arises the charm of Wit, which consists in finding analogies where they were least expected; and these analogies please the more, the greater the contrast is, in all other respects, between the objects from which they are derived. It brings together by some strange association the most incongruous ideas, and detects some point of coincidence or resemblance in things the most heterogeneous and dissimilar.* The resemblance in this case pleases upon the general principle already pointed out; but the pleasure arising from the resemblance acquires a peculiar character of

* See Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric.—Book i. Chap. ii. Sect. i. Spectator.—No. 62.

liveliness from the surprise of finding it in objects so widely different. A livelier play of fancy is excited by the very strangeness of the discovered relation, and the mind is more amused than by the perception of any common resemblance, because it glances continually from the seeming or partial similarity, to the real contrariety of the objects. Why this pleasure should express itself by those peculiar sounds and configurations of countenance which we call Laughter, can only be explained, on anatomical principles, by the hidden structure and mechanism of the corporeal frame.

The same observations are applicable, to a certain extent, to that laughter of which the object is a person. It arises from the perception of some strange conjunction of incongruous qualities, or of some striking inconsistency between character and situation, or pretensions and performances, which amuses the fancy much in the same manner as the discovery of an odd coincidence between widely different ideas. But the emotion in this case is moreover generally accompanied and enhanced by a feeling of triumph, arising from the advantageous comparison which we secretly draw

between ourselves and the object of our ridicule. To see arrogance unexpectedly humbled, presumption chastised, effrontery disconcerted, or empty pretensions exposed, at once diverts us with a contrast, and gratifies that secret malice which such assumed superiority seldom fails to inspire. A person of grave demeanour or dignified character placed in some awkward situation, or committing some gross blunder, affords amusement in the same manner, not only by the incongruity exhibited to our notice, but by reason also of that relative exaltation which we feel on seeing a superior, or one seemingly superior, brought down to the common level. Hence we learn the reason why ridicule is so peculiarly wounding to human pride, and why the dread of it has so much influence on almost every mind. It always argues a confident assumption of superiority in sense or knowledge on the part of him who expresses it, and casts contempt in some degree upon the understanding of its object. Hence also, upon a little reflection, will appear the justness of the common remark, that "smiles from reason flow;" or in other words, that the susceptibility of the emotion of laughter, which distinguishes man from brutes, arises from the superiority of

his mental powers. Brutes are incapable of feeling this emotion, because they are incapable of that degree of abstraction which a comparison of intellect implies; and because also their limited faculties are competent to remark only the more obvious resemblances and differences of things. Their want, moreover, of the faculty of language alone precludes them from what is evidently the chief source of that play of fancy which constitutes Wit. But though it is, in this sense, true, that "smiles from reason flow," it should be observed by the way, that proneness to laughter by no means increases in proportion to the enlargement of intellect. For to men of superior minds, whose thoughts habitually dwell upon subjects of high importance, it appears a kind of puerile trifling, to notice those odd coincidences and far-fetched analogies which Wit delights to discover, but which add nothing to the stock of real knowledge. And where there exists a real pre-eminence of mind, instances of absurdity or inconsistency in others afford no ground of triumph. It is, therefore, a just remark of the writer lately quoted, that laughter "is incident most to them that are conscious of the fewest abilities in themselves; who are forced to keep them-

selves in their own favour by observing the imperfections of other men. And, therefore, much laughter is a sign of Pusillanimity. For of great minds one of the proper works is, to help and free others from scorn, and to compare themselves only with the most able." *

The feelings excited by Sublimity and Beauty demand next some share of our attention, though to treat of them much at large, would be foreign to the design of the present treatise.

SECTION IX.

OF THE SENSE OF SUBLIMITY.

The emotion of Sublimity is simply a modification of the passion of Admiration, and may be explained on the same principles as the pleasure of Novelty. If what is new is pleasing, by reason of the stimulus which it gives to our attention, and the exercise which it affords to our faculties; whatever is unusually vast or extensive, whatever fills the whole capacity of the mind, and requires a stretch of imagination to grasp it in all its extent and in all its relations, will naturally impart a gratification of the same kind,

* Leviathan.—p. 27.

though far superior in the degree of its intensity. But the excitement occasioned by sublime objects has this peculiar character, that there is mingled with it a slight tinge of *fear*, which not being so strong as to overcome the pleasure of the excitement, serves only to augment its force, and to render it more exquisitely delightful. Great objects generally possess great power, or seem fitted for producing formidable effects. In contemplating such objects, therefore, our imaginations naturally revert to these formidable effects, and a conception spontaneously arises in our minds of what our feelings would be, if what we only imagine, were actually experienced, or seriously apprehended. Now the conception of a state of terror must partake, in some degree, of the same painful character as its archetype; but the ideal image being extremely faint and indistinct compared with the reality, and being accompanied, moreover, by a conviction, which ever and anon recurs to the mind, that there is no actual danger, it produces only that emotion of subdued and softened fear, which is denominated *Awe*. Such are the thoughts, and such the feelings excited by standing on the brink of a frightful precipice; by listening, as we sit around the cheerful

hearth, to the tempest howling and beating furiously without; by gazing from the shore at the raging waves; or by viewing from a station of security the eruption of a volcano, the conflagration of a city, or the horrors of a battle. Hence it appears that the doctrine of Burke, who represents Terror as the fundamental quality of the Sublime, is not entirely devoid of truth, though liable to be much misunderstood, unless properly qualified and explained in the statement.

SECTION X.

OF THE SENSE OF BEAUTY.

The term Beauty, in its primitive signification, belongs exclusively to objects of sight,* and expresses some quality by which they excite a calm and softened feeling of pleasure. The simplest and primary beauty in objects of sight consists in light and colours, and this kind of beauty, in its first origin, is altogether independent of association, being merely the appropriate gratification of the sense of sight, in the same manner as sweet flavours and fragrant odours are the appropriate gratifications

* See Stewart's Philosophical Essays. Essay on the Beautiful. Ch. ii.

of the senses respectively conversant with them. This organic pleasure continues, in every period of life, to constitute a part of the beauty of colour, though very considerably modified by association, and by the improvement, which time occasions, in the organ's perceptive and discriminating power. Beauty of figure cannot be considered so purely organic in its first origin as beauty of colour, though it may in some degree result from the same cause, which has just been hinted at, as modifying our taste in colour, namely, the organ's improved power of perception, acquired by time and practice.* A due combination of Variety and Uniformity is the fundamental quality in beauty of figure; and upon the principle already repeatedly insisted on, the reason is obvious; Variety being necessary for the exercise of observation, and Uniformity pleasing, by rendering that exercise easy, and by enabling us more fully to comprehend its object as a whole. Uniformity also, as before observed, implies a resemblance of parts, and pleases by the exercise which it thus affords to our comparing powers. Whatever affords an easy entertainment to the mind, and presents a lively stimulus to the powers of ob-

* See Note D.

servation and conception, appears in our eyes invested with a beauty proportioned to the pleasure it imparts; and such, I imagine, is the chief source of that beauty which belongs to the scenes of nature. In the pleasure derived from contemplating an extensive prospect, something may perhaps be ascribed to that simple organic gratification, which arises from the perception of the varied colours of the ground and sky, and the chequered mixture of light and shade. But how little of the pleasure arises from this cause, will be understood by considering the indifference with which the most lovely prospect is regarded by a child, to whom it appears as a mere visual sensation, unclothed with that vast variety of associated ideas, in which it appears to a more practised eye, and to whom a combination of gaudy colours and glaring lights has greater charms by far than nature's loveliest scenery. Let the prospect be presented to the eye of an adult, and though the visual sensation is precisely the same, yet to him it is *full of meaning;*—to him it tells of extensive distances; of plains, and groves, and streams, and mountains; of scattered villages, and cultivated fields, and thriving population. The minute speck

which occupies in the sphere of vision a space too small to be estimated, and which would, therefore, be entirely overlooked by the unpractised eye of infancy, is to him significant of some stately mansion in the distance. The faintly lucid streak which marks the horizon, and is hardly to be distinguished from the broad light of the o'erhanging sky, betokens to him the neighbouring ocean, and suggests its vast extent, its multitudinous waves, the distant shores to which it stretches so far beyond his utmost ken, and the navies of nations riding upon its bosom, and conveying from clime to clime, and from country to country, their interchanged productions. Upon a scene so full of meaning and of interest, no wonder that the eye should expatiate with keen delight, and be never weary of perusing through all its parts a picture which presents so fine a field for observation, and fills the mind with such a multitude of conceptions.*

But besides the charm which arises from this exercise of the faculties, there is a kind of beauty distinct from any that has yet been mentioned, and which now demands our parti-

* See note E.

cular attention, as illustrating the formation of all those more important affections which yet remain to be considered.

Though the exercise of memory and imagination is in itself pleasing, and produces in our minds a certain fondness for the objects which occasion it, it is not by any means a matter of indifference on what objects they are exercised. As memory and imagination consist in the faint reproduction of former sensations, ideas must bear some resemblance to their archetypes, and the remembrance or conception of what is pleasing or painful must necessarily be attended with the same feelings as the reality, though of course in a very inferior degree. Hence we naturally feel a liking for such objects as remind us of past, or suggest the possibility of future pleasures; and regard with aversion whatever excites the remembrance or conception of pain. The objects of our strongest feelings of attachment or dislike are, of course, those which most materially affect our happiness; and hence those more important and influential desires and affections, which regard the necessary accommodations of life, and the favour or friendship of our fellow men. But other objects

not so essentially important to our welfare, may influence our affections in a slighter degree, by being in a slighter degree serviceable or hurtful to us. Pleasure and Pain are terms by much too strong to denote the degree of good or evil which may influence us in our likings or aversions. The mere appearance of unfitness, inconvenience, or inaptitude for use, is alone sufficient to create a certain slight feeling of dislike towards the object in which it is observed; and it is this consideration of fitness or unfitness; it is this reference, which on all occasions we make, to our own convenience or use, that arrays in the colours of beauty or deformity so many objects of nature or of art, and gives rise to a very large proportion of the feelings of Taste. For as there are few objects which may not in some way be of service or disservice to us, so there are few which our imaginations may not invest with beauty or deformity in some degree. It is by no means essential to the existence of these feelings that the objects regarded should belong to ourselves, or that we should have any serious expectation of actually using them. In that case, indeed, our feelings will of course be stronger; but it is enough that we merely

imagine ourselves using them, and whatever appears incapable of being used with convenience; whatever seems unfit for the purpose it was designed to answer, will naturally be regarded with some slight feeling of dislike, though we may be assured that we shall never ourselves experience the inconvenience. Why is the spacious, neat, substantial mansion a more pleasing object to behold than the small, mean, clay-built cabin, but because the former is evidently so much better fitted for all the purposes of a human habitation, and suggests ideas of comfort and convenience which cannot possibly be associated with the latter?* Why does a deformed limb offend our sight, but because it raises in our minds the idea of awkward and uneasy gesture? For what reason does the same form appear beautiful in one object, and offensive to our taste in another, but because suitable to the use or purpose of the former, and unsuitable to that of the latter? The forms of ships, for instance, and the forms of houses are widely different; yet both are beautiful and proper in their kind, because the waving lines and rounded surfaces of the one are obviously best fitted for motion in water, and the

* See Note F.

straight lines and sharp angles of the other are as obviously best adapted for stability on land. Waving lines have been represented as essential to beauty, and beautiful they certainly are in a variety of objects; but in a pillar which supports a massive weight they would be accounted a deformity, because evidently inconsistent with the strength there needed. On the same principles we dislike to observe a want of conformity between the thickness of a pillar and the weight supported by it; a slender pillar supporting a ponderous superstructure, or a strong one with a small incumbent weight, being equally offensive to a just taste. There is nothing in the form of an oblong rectangle which renders it in itself more beautiful than a square; but for the door of a house it is obviously a more suitable form, because more correspondent with the erect figure of man, for whose use it was designed. But if the door be designed as a passage for carriages, the square, or something approaching to it, is then for similar reasons preferred. In the forms of nature we are pleased with mere variety, magnitude, and extent. The shapeless rock, the tangled thicket, the craggy mountain, the barren heath, or the wild luxuriance of vegetation,

are beheld with pleasure, or at least without disgust, in scenes where Nature reigns in solitude, and the foot of man has seldom trod. But in scenes frequented by human inhabitants, we look for cultivation, neatness, and order, as being more consistent with their comfort and convenience. This secret reference of the imagination to the use or purpose of an object contemplated, is a principle of very extensive influence both in Taste and in Morals; though it is generally so rapid and evanescent a movement of thought that it cannot be detected without close attention.*

But by far the most important instances of the operation of this principle remain yet to be adduced. The pleasures which have yet been mentioned as objects of affection or desire, are for the most part only occasional. They constitute no object of permanent pursuit or habitual desire. They are like the flowers which the traveller plucks on his way, but not like the home to which he constantly looks forward, and constantly tends. The affections which we now proceed to consider, are of a more durable and important character, consist-

* See Note G.

ing in the habitual love or permanent desire of some particular object, and furnishing the grand incitement to all the continued pursuits and serious business of life.

SECTION XI.

OF THE DESIRE OF PROPERTY.

The desire of Property is evidently an acquired passion, of which it is easy to shew the nature and trace the gradual formation. Whatever has been the means of imparting to us any original gratification, will naturally, by the law of association, be regarded with attachment; and if it appear capable of being still the source of future gratification, it will necessarily become an object of desire. Were the objects which are instrumental to the gratification of our wants, placed at all times immediately within our reach, and furnished in the same inexhaustible abundance as the air, the water, and the herbage, they would never be the objects of permanent attachment or long continued pursuit:—they would be sought and seized, when wanted; but no one in that case would ever think of appropriating to himself more than he wanted at the moment, or of lay-

ing by a store for future use. Such is, in fact, the condition, in a great measure, of brutes. Their food is spread before them on the lap of earth, and needs no previous labour or forethought to provide. Their vesture grows spontaneously on their bodies, without any care or skill of their's to fabricate. And habitations they need none, save the den, the thicket, or the tree, which first offers itself as a place of shelter or repose. But besides wanting the inducement, they also want the foresight, which leads to the desire of property. To their limited faculties the present is all in all; the future forms no subject of their care: and accordingly, though they may vindicate their right to the food which they have seized, or the place of shelter they have occupied, yet they are incapable, for the most part, of that forethought of the future which alone can create the desire or the notion of property.* Endowed with more enlarged capacities, and subject to more various wants, which only his own exertions can satisfy, man is naturally led to labour for the future, by acquiring the permanent possession, and amassing a large supply of whatever contributes to the sustenance, ac-

* See Note H.

commodation, or pleasure of life. Our motives to this are continually strengthened by growing reason and more enlarged experience, which display continually fresh proofs of the numerous and important advantages of wealth, not only as the means of procuring the necessaries and comforts of life, but as enabling us to command the services of others, and to obtain that influence and homage which arise from the hope of our favours, or the terror of our power. No wonder, then, that the desire of wealth should become one of the strongest passions of the human heart. So great, indeed, is the ascendency it acquires, that it is no uncommon thing to see it triumph even over those desires which gave it birth. Money, undoubtedly, is loved at first merely as the means of procuring the actual enjoyment of the comforts, accommodations, and pleasures of life. But by the natural influence of the law of association, which we shall often have occasion to notice, the means become indentified in our regards with the end to which they are subservient, and money, by being so essential an instrument of enjoyment, and so constantly a subject of thought and attention, comes at length to be regarded as an ultimate object of desire.

This is more or less the case with all who have in any degree experienced the advantages, or been engaged in the pursuit of wealth; but in minds of a certain cast, the love of money for its own sake acquires such complete ascendency, as entirely to overpower every other passion, and even to supersede in some degree the desires which originally gave it birth, so that nothing but the most urgent necessities of nature will induce its wretched votary to part with the smallest portion of his hoarded treasure. This fact deserves particular attention, as tending to illustrate similar changes which take place in other affections of the human heart.*

But wealth alone is insufficient for happiness, and can be but very imperfectly enjoyed, unless accompanied with the advantages of social intercourse, and the esteem and favour of our fellow men. Hence arise the following propensities, which hold, with the desire of wealth, divided empire over the human breast.

* See Belsham's Elements of Moral Philosophy.—Sec. iii.

SECTION XII.

OF THE DESIRE OF SOCIETY.

This principle, like many others, is represented by a certain class of metaphysical writers, as one of those instincts, which can only be considered as ultimate facts, the existence of which is undeniable, but the cause of which we cannot explain by reference to any more general or simple principle. "Abstracting," says Mr. Stewart, "from those affections which interest us in the happiness of others, and from all the advantages which we ourselves derive from the social union, we are led by a natural and instinctive desire, to associate with our own species."* If by the terms *natural* and *instinctive*, in this passage, be merely meant, that the desire to which they are applied, is one to which we are necessarily led by the constitution of our nature and the circumstances of our condition, the statement certainly cannot be disputed. But if the meaning of the sentence be, as I presume it is, that we cannot at all discern the means by which we are led to this desire, it is an opinion in which I see no reason to acquiesce. For, considering the state of utter helplessness

* Outlines of Moral Philosophy.—p. 86.

in which man is first brought into the world, the long period during which he continues entirely dependent on the care of others, and how large a portion of his enjoyments in every later period he derives from his intercourse with others, do not these circumstances appear of themselves sufficient to explain that fondness for society which so peculiarly characterizes the human race? With such a constitution of body and mind as that which nature has given them, can we conceive it possible that men in general should so divest themselves of their earliest and strongest associations, and so neglect the most obvious means of happiness, as to shun all intercourse with one another, and dwell apart in solitary, savage, and destitute independence? Besides the essential help and services for which we are indebted to society, the mere excitement which arises from the company and conversation of our fellow-men, is itself so important a constituent of happiness, that the want of it is alone sufficient to render long continued solitude intolerably irksome.

SECTION XIII.

OF THE DESIRE OF ESTEEM.

Allied to the desire of Society, and flowing from it, succeeds the desire of Esteem, Honour, or Praise. This also has been represented by some as an instinctive and original principle, not resolvable into reason or experience, or into any other principle more general than itself.* That it makes its appearance at a very early period of life, cannot be denied; for children may be observed to become very soon sensible of the pleasure of being noticed and admired. But though of early growth, there is a period of human life, in which as yet no sign of its existence can be found. The new-born infant is evidently susceptible of no pleasures or pains, but such as are altogether corporeal; and so far from being pleased with the notice or admiration of others, has scarcely an idea of any thing beyond its own immediate sensations. It is only by slow degrees that he becomes attentive to surrounding objects and persons; and even then, it is not till after he has repeatedly experienced the effects of the good-will or dis-

* Stewart's Outlines of Moral Philosophy.—p. 89. Reid's Essays on the Active Powers.—Essay iii. Part ii. Chap. 2.

pleasure of others, that he becomes capable of being influenced by the expression of these feelings. A child's earliest desires and gratifications are manifestly no other than those which arise from his mere animal appetites, and he follows their impulse with a blind eagerness which admits not even the idea of restraint. But experience soon teaches him that he is subject to the control of others, who have power to aid or to obstruct the accomplishment of his desires. Their displeasure, being the occasion of the restraint or denial of his wishes, becomes, of course, by the natural influence of association, an object of dislike and fear. Their favour, being accompanied with indulgence and gratification, becomes in like manner an object of desire. The passion thus generated is more and more confirmed as we advance in years, by the continual proofs, which experience affords, of the advantages which arise from the good-will and regard of others, and of the evils which flow from their animosity or censure. Assuming various forms, hereafter to be mentioned, it reigns almost universally in the hearts of men, and not unfrequently obtains pre-eminence over every other passion.

Even the love of life has often yielded to the love of fame, and death in all its terrors has been a thousand times encountered for the sake of a posthumous renown, which could only in idea be enjoyed. This fact has been adduced, by an eminent living writer, as a decisive proof that the desire of esteem is not an acquired, but an implanted principle. "Even the love of life," he observes, "daily gives way to the desire of esteem; and of an esteem, which, as it is only to affect our memories, cannot be supposed to interest our self-love. In what manner the association of ideas should manufacture, out of the other principles of our constitution, a new principle stronger than them all, it is difficult to conceive."* If, however, we consider how the love of money, when carried to excess, supersedes, as was lately remarked, those very desires which originally gave it birth, it will not appear surprising, that any other passion, which is constantly receiving fresh accessions of strength, should be capable of acquiring a similar ascendency. If money, which is allowed to be originally desired only as a means of obtaining other things, may not only become, by the

* Stewart's Outlines of Moral Philosophy.—p. 89.

influence of habit, an object of ultimate desire, but be valued even above the ends to which it is subservient; what difficulty is there in supposing that a similar process, a similar transference of affection from the ends to the means, takes place with respect to the desire of fame? Mr. Stewart has himself sufficiently explained this process in his account of the formation of our artificial desires. "Whatever," he observes, "conduces to the attainment of any object of natural desire, is itself desired on account of its subserviency to this end; and frequently comes in process of time to acquire in our estimation an intrinsic value. It is thus that wealth becomes with many an ultimate object of pursuit; although it is undoubtedly valued at first, merely as the means of attaining other objects. In like manner, men are led to desire dress, equipage, retinue, furniture, on account of the estimation in which they are supposed to be held by the public. Such desires have been called, by Dr. Hutcheson, Secondary Desires. Their origin," he adds, "is easily explicable on the principle of Association."* True; and by this admission, sufficient data are afforded for totally overthrowing that system of instinctive

* Outlines of Moral Philosophy. p. 96.

principles, which this writer, and others of the same school, have so strenuously supported.

The desire of esteem, as will hereafter appear, acts a very important part in the formation of our moral sentiments.

SECTION XIV.

OF THE DESIRE OF POWER.

The desire of Power may be considered, in a certain sense, as involved in all our other desires, inasmuch as they all necessarily lead us to wish for power over their objects. But in many instances the mere exercise of power, independently of any further end, appears to be a source of enjoyment. In consequence of that original love of action and excitement, which has been already repeatedly noticed, there is a pleasure experienced in the production of any striking effect, more especially when it is accomplished only by a slight effort. The child, for instance, delights to exert his little strength upon the objects within his reach, without any further end in view than merely this exertion. He is vexed, when the objects which he attempts to move or handle, do not obey his will; and

pleased, when he succeeds in managing them, particularly when he can produce, by a slight exertion, an extraordinary and striking effect. Much of the charm also of the sports of boyhood consists in the easy exertions, which they call forth, of strength, agility, and skill. To the same source may be partly referred many of the pleasures of more advanced life, such as equestrian exercises, hunting, shooting, fishing, &c., the charm of which appears to arise in some measure from the easy exercise of power in commanding and directing the strength of brute animals, or in gaining, by our superior knowledge or ingenuity, a conquest over them. The chief field, however, for the exercise of power is human society, and that disposition to which the title of the love of power pre-eminently belongs, is the desire to resist or control the will of others, and to make that will subservient to our own. This disposition exists, to a certain extent, in every human breast, since every one, of course, desires to accomplish his own wishes in preference to those of others, and would gladly overcome whatever may obstruct their accomplishment. But in the intercourse of society the will of every individual is subject to perpetual hinderance from the interfering

purposes of others, and in the contest which hence arises, some are more obstinate and resolute than others in maintaining their own determinations. This it is which constitutes what is properly denominated the love of Power; and it is evidently a disposition which cannot prevail, in any considerable degree, except in those who have courage to encounter that enmity which opposition of purposes cannot fail to create. Weak minds can display this disposition only in that minor form of it, called Obstinacy or Waywardness, that is, by merely resisting, where they can do so safely, the control or influence attempted to be exercised over them by others. The love of power, and the love of honour, often manifest themselves in the same manner, so that the latter may be mistaken for the former. Stations of power are frequently desired, less for the sake of the power itself, than for the sake of that flattering attention and respect, which is always paid to exalted rank. And they who aspire to influence others, not by the terrors of power, but by the force of superior understanding, or the arts of persuasion or address, are commonly actuated by the love of honour; for what more flattering tribute of praise can any

one receive from others, than that which is implied in their willing submission to his judgment or advice?

We now proceed to a class of feelings which are distinguished by their objects being *persons* or *individuals*, and to which the name *Affections* has been more peculiarly applied. This term, in philosophical language, is applicable to all feelings which regard persons, whether of a benevolent or malignant character. The simplest and most obvious of these are Gratitude, and its opposite, Resentment.

SECTION XV.

OF GRATITUDE AND RESENTMENT.

These affections so directly and necessarily flow from the simple capacity of pleasure and pain, that no writer, so far as I am aware, has thought it necessary to suppose a distinct principle or instinct, in order to account for them. If *things*, which have been the means of past, or are regarded as the source of future benefit or injury, can excite correspondent feelings of attachment or aversion, well may the same

feelings be excited by *persons*, whose influence over our happiness is so much greater. The feelings which regard persons, must of course differ in some respects from those which regard things, by reason of the different nature of their objects; but it is the same association of good or evil which operates in the formation of each class. In the case of resentment, this remark may be confirmed, if it need confirmation, by observing the momentary impulse, which we sometimes feel, to strike the inanimate objects which have been the means of hurting us, before the absurdity of such resentment has fully presented itself to our minds.

Feelings of attachment towards particular individuals may arise, not only from the remembrance of particular benefits, but from a variety of pleasing ideas associated with them. Of this kind are the affections of Kindred, Love, and Friendship.

SECTION XVI.

OF THE AFFECTIONS OF KINDRED.

The Parental Affection, of all the feelings of the human heart, has most the appearance of

an instinct, more especially as it is manifested not less strongly in brutes than in the human race. That *physical causes* may have some influence in creating the peculiar fondness of the female parent for her new-born offspring, is highly probable; and so far the affection may perhaps not improperly be termed instinctive.* Leaving, however, this part of the inquiry to physiologists, to whose province it more properly belongs, let us here confine our attention to the *moral causes*, which are the only source of the *paternal* attachment, and of the *maternal* also in its more advanced state. It seems nothing more than the natural and necessary effect of that love of self which is inseparable from every sentient being, to regard with interest whatever is, in any way, related to, or connected with self. And where the connexion is so obvious and close as that between parent and child, no wonder that the object so connected should be regarded with a feeling approaching to that with which the individual regards himself. The utterly helpless and dependent state of infancy presents to reason itself an urgent claim for fostering care and kind attentions, and powerfully awakens the

* See Note K.

sympathetic feelings even of those who are bound to it by no particular ties; how much more then must this effect be produced in those to whose hands the helpless and dependent being is committed. The very anxiety which childhood calls for, serves, when not excessive, to enhance the parent's fondness; for it is a just observation of Mr. Hume's, that "difficulties increase passions of every kind; and by rousing our attention, and exciting our active powers, produce an emotion which nourishes the prevailing affection."* And if to these sources of interest we add the delightful anticipations and hopes, in which the imagination of the parent indulges, of future comfort from the kind attentions, and future exultation in the virtues and honours of the child, the parental attachment will be sufficiently accounted for, without the unsatisfactory supposition of an original, implanted instinct. It is some confirmation of this doctrine, that the parental attachment, at least the attachment of the father, is always weakest at first, and gradually gains strength, as the faculties of the child are developed, and pleasing associations multiply around him.

* Hume's Essay on Tragedy.

The Filial and Fraternal Affections are so evidently *acquired*, that no writer, so far as I am aware, has ever claimed for them an instinctive origin. Their rise and growth may be traced by a very slight observation. The newborn child is manifestly as yet a stranger to any such attachments, and has no thought or desire but for its own gratification. Its early partiality for its mother or nurse arises only from its remembrance of the source of its delicious nourishment. The warm caresses lavished upon it are received for a long time with total indifference. Its food, its toys, its play, are the only objects of its earliest affections. It is not till the child has extended his knowledge of persons beyond the family circle, and has learned that there are other people in the world besides his parents, brothers, and sisters, that the affections of kindred begin distinctly to manifest themselves. How can he then regard with equal attachment those who have so long attended and caressed him, so long assisted in his amusements, and ministered to his wants, and those to whom he is under no obligations, and of whom he has no knowledge? And as he advances in life, and forms a more extensive acquaintance with the

world, what more natural and necessary an effect of the associating principle, than that he should feel himself bound by peculiar ties to that family with which he has so long consorted, and to those parents who have been his earliest, best, and most indulgent friends?

SECTION XVII.

OF FRIENDSHIP AND ANTIPATHY.

Attachments of great strength are also formed between persons not united by the bonds of kindred. Of these we shall here consider only that which is designated by the name of Friendship. This partiality for particular individuals may arise from various sources. Sometimes, like the affections of kindred, it is merely the result of long intercourse, and the consequent accumulation around the beloved individual of a multitude of pleasing associations. Sometimes it is merely the feeling of gratitude created by acts of kindness. Sometimes it arises from mutual esteem, and partakes of the nature of a moral sentiment, which yet remains to be explained; sometimes from that openness of heart which loves to communicate its secret thoughts and feelings to the ear of

confidence; and not unfrequently it is merely a combination cemented by interest, or maintained by servility and flattery on the one hand, and gratified vanity on the other.

The opposite feelings of Antipathy or Hatred admit of a like easy explanation. Some times they arise from injuries actually received or seriously apprehended; sometimes from that superior merit, which, because it deprives us of what we consider as our due share of notice or distinction, is regarded in the light of an injury. But dislike, we know, is often felt, without any grounds of resentment, suspicion, or envy, and for which it is difficult, even for him who feels it, to assign a reason. If, however, we recall to mind those shadowy and impalpable forms of good and evil, those slight and delicate conceptions of fitness and unfitness, which have been shown to influence our taste in *things*, we shall not be surprised to find, that our feelings with regard to *persons* frequently arise from appearances equally fanciful, and from processes of thought which equally elude a superficial notice. The mere perception of qualities in another, which seem capable of causing us detriment or annoyance, is alone

sufficient to create dislike, even though we may feel assured that we shall never actually experience their effect. Sometimes the mere resemblance of the manners or features of an innocent person to those of one who has actually injured or offended us, will create in our minds an antipathy towards him, which, however sensible we may be of its injustice, we shall not perhaps be able entirely to overcome. And arrogant pretensions, or airs of conceit or haughtiness, as they wound the secret pride of all observers, seldom fail to inspire inveterate enmity. These observations are sufficiently obvious; but they deserve attention, as tending to throw light on the formation of our moral sentiments, the process of which, as will hereafter appear, is similar to that which has been just described.

SECTION XVIII.

OF PATRIOTISM.

There is another affection which, though it be doubtful whether it relate most to things or persons, may here be allowed a place; I mean Patriotism, or the love of Country. This affection, in its first and lowest stage, regards no

more than the town, the village, or the neighbourhood, which has been the scene of early childhood or long residence. In its highest form, it is a far nobler and more enlarged affection, not confined to a narrow spot, nor fixed upon inanimate objects, but extending its regards to a whole nation, and prompting to active exertions for its benefit. It is only, however, in the latter case that the affection is dignified with the name of Patriotism, though it is the same principle which operates in both. I am not aware that any author has ever represented this as an instinctive affection. It admits, indeed, of very easy explanation on the principle of association, and has already been indirectly accounted for in some foregoing observations on the pleasures of memory. Whatever is connected with self, and suggests a thousand remembrances of early life, must naturally excite a stronger and more lasting interest, than objects with which we have no manner of connexion, and to which we can attach no recollections. The novelty of fresh scenes may, indeed, delight us for a time; but that is only a very transient impression, and no sooner has the excitement subsided through longer acquaintance, or the desire of it been satiated by

repeated change, than we feel the superior charm which the scenes of our early residence derive from the numberless pleasing recollections associated with them. Hence it is that an attachment for particular scenes or places seldom distinctly manifests itself, till a temporary absence has revealed to our eyes these secret sources of endearment. And in like manner, the more enlarged affection, usually understood by the term Patriotism, may be observed to be generally felt in the strongest degree by those who have travelled into foreign countries, because they are thus made sensible of many peculiarities in the manners, customs, and institutions of their own country, of which they were not previously aware, and which appear in their eyes to greater advantage, by comparison with what they have observed abroad. But without foreign travel, we become in some degree acquainted with other countries, by means of conversation and reading; and who that hears or reads of wars carried on, or rivalries of a more peaceful character maintained between nations, can feel indifferent, when his own country is a party in the contest? And although his judgment should disapprove of the contest, and prompt

him to deprecate his country's success, on account of the believed injustice of its cause; yet the stronger influence of that secret partiality which arises from the connexion with self, will often prevail over every other consideration, and lead him to rejoice, in despite of his principles, in the very triumphs which he had deprecated before.

SECTION XIX.

OF SYMPATHY.

The last affection which claims our attention, previously to the more direct examination of our moral sentiments, is that called Sympathy. This term, in common usage, almost exclusively denotes participation with another's *sorrow:* but in philosophical language, it expresses generally the disposition to share in the feelings of others, whatever the nature of those feelings may be. There is no affection which the advocates of instinctive principles have more confidently appealed to in proof of their doctrine, than to this. The prompt compassion which is excited by spectacles of distress, is a feeling so manifestly remote from any interested considerations, and which often leads to such ardent

exertions for the relief of the distressed object, with such disregard of our own ease or comfort, that any attempt to deduce it from a selfish origin has been decried, as not less absurd in itself, than derogatory to the honour of human nature. Yet as it appears undeniable that our own pains and pleasures are the only principles of action which can be observed in the earliest stage of our existence; as no signs whatever of sympathy appear in infancy, and no precise period can be pointed out when nature first calls this principle into exercise; it is surely not unreasonable to expect, that, by closer attention to the progress of the mind's developement, some connexion may be traced between our own sensibility to pain and pleasure, and the tendency, which we gradually acquire, to sympathize with the pains and pleasures of others. Now if we narrowly examine the state of our minds when under the influence of compassion, we shall find that it consists *in our having a lively conception of the pain or misery which we witness in another*, and *in imagining what we should feel ourselves, if placed in similar circumstances.* If we cannot form a conception of the pain endured by another, we cannot feel compassion for it; and exactly pro-

portioned to the distinctness and liveliness of this conception, is the strength of our compassion. "As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in a like situation. Though our brother is upon the rack, as long as we ourselves are at our ease, our senses will never inform us of what he suffers. They never did and never can carry us beyond our own person, and it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are his sensations. Neither can that faculty help us to this any other way, than by representing to us what would be our own, if we were in his case. It is the impressions of our own senses only, not those of his, which our imaginations copy. By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike them. His agonies, when they are thus brought home to ourselves, when we have thus

adopted and made them our own, begin at last to affect us, and we then tremble and shudder at the thought of what he feels. For as to be in pain or distress of any kind excites the most excessive sorrow, so to conceive or to imagine that we are in it, excites some degree of the same emotion, in proportion to the vivacity or dullness of the conception."*

In confirmation of this doctrine several obvious facts may be adduced, among which, those mentioned by the profound and elegant author, to whom belong the valuable remarks just quoted, deserve particular attention. "When we see a stroke aimed, and just ready to fall upon the leg or arm of another person, we naturally shrink and draw back our own leg or our own arm; and when it does fall, we feel it in some measure, and are hurt by it as well as the sufferer. The mob, when they are gazing at a dancer on the slack rope, naturally writhe and twist and balance their own bodies, as they see him do, and as they feel that they themselves must do, if in his situation."† To these may be added the following illustrations.—It is a

* Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments.—Part. i. Sec. i. Ch. i.

† Ibid.

topic of common remark, that a state of uninterrupted prosperity tends to harden the heart, and to render us insensible to the distresses of others; and that, on the contrary, those persons are generally most disposed to feel for the unhappy, who have themselves experienced the discipline of adverse fortune. Hence the propriety of that fine sentiment, which Virgil has put into the mouth of Dido;—

> Haud ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.—

and of the following similar sentiment of Gray, in his Ode to Adversity;—

> Stern rugged nurse, thy rigid lore
> With patience many a year she bore;
> What sorrow was thou bad'st her know,
> And from her own she learnt to melt at others' woe.

The power of readily conceiving the sufferings of the unfortunate must evidently be greatest in those who have themselves experienced similar sufferings, and hence it is that the hearts of such persons are more peculiarly susceptible of feelings of compassion. In like manner persons of robust health, who have never known sickness, are little disposed in general to feel for invalids, because, having never experienced, they cannot well conceive the sensations of an

infirm frame. Persons also of firm nerves, who are best able to endure pain themselves, are generally the least prone to sympathize with it in others; whilst they, on the contrary, most readily melt with compassion, who possess a tender and delicate frame acutely alive to every sensation. It is for this reason that the female sex are so much more susceptible of pity than the male; their more delicate nervous system rendering them more sensible themselves of pain, and therefore more capable of conceiving and sympathizing with the pain of others. It may also be observed, that we sympathize most readily with those whose situation most nearly resembles our own, for the obvious reason that we are best acquainted with that situation, and can enter most completely into the feelings which such persons in any given circumstances will experience. But the sufferings, on the other hand, of creatures widely different from ourselves in their frame and nature, the sufferings, for instance, of reptiles and insects, excite but little pity in our hearts, because we can but imperfectly conceive the feelings of such animals. These facts may be sufficient to shew that sympathy consists in forming a lively conception of another's state or feelings; which,

being admitted, will furnish an easy and satisfactory explanation of all the effects of sympathy. The remembrance, conception, or idea of any sensation differs, as I have before observed, from that sensation itself, only in the degree of its vivacity or distinctness. To conceive pain in others, therefore, is to feel it in some degree ourselves, and our aversion to a painful conception will naturally prompt us to seek the means of removing it. Now this may be done in two ways; either by striving to relieve the distressed object, or by flying from the painful spectacle. The latter, it is well known, is a method not unfrequently adopted by persons of weak nerves or morbid sensibility, who, not being able to endure the sight of misery, fly from it with selfish haste, or are thrown into a state of such extreme agitation, as to become incapable of making the smallest effort for the relief of the distressed object. Now though this may be considered as the effect of excessive sensibility, and is so in a certain view, yet in reality it argues a mode of sympathy as imperfect, as it is evidently selfish and worthless. It arises from the imagination dwelling so exclusively upon the *pain*, as not to admit the idea of the *wishes* excited

by it. They whose nerves are stronger, or whose imaginations are under better control, though they conceive with less vividness the misery which they contemplate, imagine at the same time with greater distinctness, the strong desires of relief which that misery produces; they enter more completely into the sufferer's thoughts; they appreciate more justly the urgency of his wishes; they think how cruel he must feel the denial of succour by any who are able to afford it; and thus participating not only in the sensations, but also in the wishes of the sufferer, they are necessarily impelled to seek his relief by every means within their power. But in those of false or morbid sensibility, the attention is so entirely engrossed by the conception of the agony they witness, that they yield entirely to its single impulse, and take the readiest way of escaping from it. Without thinking of the earnest wishes for relief which the actual sufferer himself must feel, their minds are solely occupied by their own impatience to rid themselves of a painful conception, and they therefore fly with selfish precipitation from the object which excites it.

From these remarks it appears that Sympathy is not necessarily a benevolent affection. It may be either selfish or disinterested, according to the mode in which it operates; and in each case it may evidently be accounted for by the acknowledged faculties and laws of the human mind, without requiring the supposition of any instinctive origin. Nor do I see why this explanation should be considered as at all less honourable to human nature, than that to which I have just alluded, since it does not by any means deny that sympathy may be disinterested, but merely aims to shew its remote derivation, by the natural operation of the laws of the human mind, from the simple capacity of pleasure and pain in the individual. And certainly such an explanation is far more satisfactory to the philosophical mind, than that doctrine of instincts, which represents this, and so many other phenomena of the mind as ultimate and detached facts that admit of no explanation.

But to this explanation of the process of the mind in Sympathy it may be objected, that it represents this affection as being altogether of a *painful* character; and whence, then, that

luxury of pity of which we have heard so much? I answer, that pity in its extreme cases is always a painful feeling. To behold a fellow creature writhing under the agonies of corporeal torture, is a sight which never did and never can afford gratification, except of the most malignant kind, and from which we naturally turn away with horror. It is only, I think, in cases of lighter distress, of distress which chiefly affects the mind, and which we are able to remove by our aid, or alleviate by our condolence, that the pleasure of sympathy is felt; and in this case the pleasure, I apprehend, arises, not immediately from our conception of another's suffering, but from other thoughts and feelings which that conception serves to introduce. The conception of pain can never be in itself agreeable in any degree; but when it operates in such a manner as to lead us to participate in the wishes of the sufferer, and to desire the removal of his anguish, this fellow-feeling and this desire prevent the mind from dwelling on the idea of what is painful, and involve in themselves that good-will for the sufferer, which cannot be otherwise than productive of pleasure. For kindness, by whatever means created, is essentially an

agreeable emotion, because always either founded on pleasing reminiscences, or accompanied by pleasing anticipations of gratitude or returned attachment; and in this instance it derives new force and augmented pleasure from having succeeded and overcome a previous painful feeling. It is an observation of Dr. Campbell's, that, "from a group of passions associated together, and having the same object, some of which are of the pleasant, others of the painful kind, if the pleasant predominate, there ariseth often a greater and a more durable pleasure to the mind, than would result from these, if alone and unmixed. That the case is so," he adds, "will, I believe, on a careful inquiry, be found to be a matter of experience; how it happens to be so, I am afraid human sagacity will never be able to investigate."* Notwithstanding the difficulty which this author here professes to have felt in accounting for the fact in question, it seems to me a natural consequence of that law of our frame by which a state of excitement once, by whatever cause, produced, lends its energy to

* See Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric.—Book i. Chap. xi. Sec. 2. The same observation is made and amply illustrated by Mr. Hume in his Essay on Tragedy.

any feeling then created in the mind. With what peculiar force do joy and sorrow seize and carry away the soul, when attended with surprise! How greatly is the energy of a determined, persevering spirit augmented by difficulties! Love is never so ardent as when it succeeds a state of jealousy, distrust, or discord; and attachment of every kind is wonderfully strengthened by a mixture of anxiety about its object. Why then should it be deemed a matter of wonder or difficulty, that the agitation arising from our painful conception of another's anguish, should give a high degree of force to the feelings of benevolence which succeed and predominate over it?

There are some other facts, which, at first view, appear at variance with the foregoing explanation of sympathy; but which, when more fully considered, will be found to confirm it: I allude to those cases in which we feel for those who do not feel for themselves. When we witness any gross violation of the rules of decorum or propriety, we sometimes blush and feel ashamed for the offender, though he manifests no sense of shame himself; because our imaginations represent to us, not what his feel-

ings actually are, but what our own would be, had we acted in the same manner. We feel also for the maniac, who is altogether insensible of what we cannot but consider as the greatest of calamities; and our pity is perhaps never so lively, as when we see him in

> "Moody madness laughing wild,
> Amid severest woe."

Our imagination dwells upon all the mournful circumstances of his great privation; but, though we perceive that the sufferer is himself unconscious of his loss, we cannot enter into, we cannot realize to our fancy, the same insensibility; and as our feelings depend entirely upon what we conceive, we cannot help commiserating his condition, though assured that it is, to the object of our commiseration, a state of enjoyment. It seems a still more unaccountable fact, if the foregoing explanation of sympathy be true, that we pity the *dead*. If it be true that pity in all cases arises from that process of thought which we have described, from transferring ourselves in imagination into another's situation, and conceiving what our own feelings would be in the same situation; it will appear strange that this sentiment should be at all entertained towards those who

are known to be now altogether exempt from suffering. But the fact is, that we cannot realize to our conception the nonentity of the dead, any more than the insensibility of the insane. The thing, indeed, is plainly in its own nature impossible; for really to exchange situations with the dead, would be to divest ourselves entirely of thought and sensation, and of course to exclude the very conception which we suppose. But by a sort of illusion of the fancy, which we cannot altogether shake off, we attribute to the dead the consciousness of the living. We imagine ourselves transferred to their condition with all our present faculties, and while we shudder at the thought of the dismal accompaniments of death, and picture to our fancy that dark, and cold, and silent abode in which the dead are laid, cut off for ever from the light of day and the cheering intercourse of human society, and destined soon to moulder into dust and become the loathsome food of loathsome reptiles; in despite of our better judgment which now and then corrects the illusion, we impute the same feelings to the dead themselves; and hence those expressions of unfeigned commiseration with which we are naturally prompted to men-

tion them, and that reluctance, which is so universally felt, to speak of them in terms of censure or disparagement,* which seems like heaping additional injury on those who already are sinking beneath the pressure of misfortune. This feeling is sometimes strong enough to subdue the fiercest and most malignant passions. Revenge and malice are instantly softened, when once it is known that their victim is no more, and give place to the deepest contrition for the wrongs they have inflicted. To the same cause may be ascribed the soothing gratification which we feel in paying to our deceased friends the vain honours of funeral rites. We cannot, and we do not wish to banish the idea, that they are sensible to our tokens of respect or attachment; that their spirits still hover around the funeral pomp or the monumental pile, and derive consolation from the flattering tribute. Thus strange and subtle are the workings of imagination; thus powerful its influence over the affections of the heart.

The pleasure of sympathy has already been in part accounted for as the effect of that

* De mortuis nil nisi bonum.

benevolence to which it generally leads. But there is, also, in sympathy a pleasure of another kind, which demands particular notice; a pleasure which almost exclusively belongs to our sympathy with mental suffering. The author whose remarks on the subject now before us have already been largely quoted, has observed and explained with great ability, how much less readily we sympathize with those passions which take their origin from the body, than with those which take their origin from the imagination. "The frame of my body," he observes, "can be but little affected by the alterations which are brought about upon that of my companion: but my imagination is more ductile, and more readily assumes, if I may say so, the shape and configuration of the imaginations of those with whom I am familiar. A disappointment in love, or ambition, will, upon this account, call forth more sympathy than the greatest bodily evil. Those passions arise altogether from the imagination. The person who has lost his whole fortune, if he is in health, feels nothing in his body. What he suffers is from the imagination only, which represents to him the loss of his dignity, neglect from his friends, contempt from his

enemies, dependance, want and misery, coming fast upon him; and we sympathize with him more strongly upon this account, because our imaginations can more readily mould themselves upon his imagination, than our bodies can mould themselves upon his body."* But besides this greater *facility*, there is also greater *pleasure* in sympathizing with mental suffering. Sympathy with bodily pain can never be in itself agreeable, because the lively conception of pain cannot be otherwise than painful in some degree; and if any pleasure attend such sympathy, it can be only an indirect effect, arising from those benevolent feelings and exertions to which it may lead. But it is otherwise in the case of mental distress, which not consisting in one single sensation of agony, but in a variety of thoughts which pass in hurried succession through the mind, excites a similar activity of thought in the mind of the spectator; and it is this circumstance which renders sympathy with such distress pleasing generally in its own nature. In the case of the sufferer himself, this activity of the imagination serves only to augment his anguish, because he is too deeply concerned, too violently agitated

* Theory of Moral Sentiments.—Part I. Sec. ii. Ch. 1.

by the thoughts called up by his busy fancy, to be capable of deriving pleasure from their mere multiplicity and variety. But observers regard the subject with calmer minds; and though they conceive in some faint degree the feelings of the sufferer, though they enter in imagination into his situation, and picture to their minds the various distressing circumstances of his case, they cannot so completely realize it to their fancy, as to be sensible of any very acute distress; so that the pleasure which arises from the mere excitement of their thoughts, becomes the predominant feeling, which, agreeably to the law already noticed, is not imbittered, but enhanced by the slightly painful nature of the conceptions themselves. Hence it is that *distresses of the heart*, if we be not ourselves very closely connected with the sufferer, and very deeply concerned in his welfare, always excite a sympathy which we love to cherish. If premature death has bereaved a parent of his only child, and that child a son just verging upon manhood, whose virtuous dispositions and rare endowments gave certain promise of his future eminence;—if a lover, by a like fatality, has been suddenly awakened from his dream of bliss, and doomed

to exchange the joyous nuptial preparations for the mournful obsequies of her he loved ;— or if, from the pinnacle of greatness and prosperity, one who has meekly borne his merited honours, has been hurled by some dire reverse of fortune to the level of the common throng ;— in these and similar cases a universal sympathy is felt, which, though it assumes the tone of sorrow, imparts a secret satisfaction. We love to talk of the interesting case, and to dwell in fancy upon all its aggravating circumstances ; and though we express for the sufferer the deepest concern, it is not so much what we *actually* feel, as what we imagine we *ought* to feel ; and were we candid, we should acknowledge that the pleasure which arises from the excitement of our thoughts, is the feeling that really predominates in our minds.

This explanation of the pleasure of sympathy in cases of *real* distress may be applied, with little variation, to the pleasure which we derive from representations of *fictitious* distress in tragedy and other works of fiction. It is the same excitement of thought, the same lively play of fancy, which constitutes in this, as in the foregoing case, the primary source of

gratification; which gratification is here also modified by the subordinate emotion of pity blending with it, and imparting to it new vivacity, and a peculiar softened character. In this case, indeed, the graces of language, the beauties of poetic imagery, and the skill and ingenuity of the narrative, form an additional charm, which is not found in spectacles of real distress; but this is in general more than counterbalanced by the superior energy which the sense of *reality* gives to all the emotions excited by the latter. Narratives or representations of fictitious distress may, indeed, by means of the artful choice of circumstances, and the careful exclusion of all counteracting impressions, excite a livelier interest than the *ordinary* distresses of real life; and this it is, I may observe by the way, which constitutes the hurtful tendency of sentimental writings; but no narrative or representation, however artfully contrived or forcibly expressed, can equal in its power of interest the *more signal tragedies* of actual life. It is observed by Burke, and the observation is founded on a just knowledge of human nature, that if, during the representation of a deeply interesting tragedy, a report were spread that the execu-

tion of some distinguished criminal was about to take place in the immediate neighbourhood, the benches of the theatre would be instantly cleared, and all the audience would rush with eagerness to behold this real tragedy. Such power has reality to enhance the vividness of that associated train of thoughts and feelings, which is alike in each case the source of gratification.

But is not this, it may be objected, a case of *corporeal* suffering; the contemplation of which ought, therefore, according to a former statement, to be painful rather than agreeable? I answer, no; it is not a case of *purely* corporeal suffering. It is the *mind* of the sufferer which is the chief object of attention in the case supposed. It is the consideration of his guilt, of his shame, of his remorse, of his fortitude, the attempt to imagine how he thinks and feels, which chiefly furnishes occupation to our thoughts. Our curiosity is strongly excited to see how human nature can act under such trying circumstances. Our attention is awake to every word and gesture of the sufferer, to every smallest variation of his features, which may reveal to us his inward feelings. And

our conception of his anguish only so far operates on our minds, as to lend new force, and a peculiar character of awe and solemnity, to the gratification which arises from this mental excitement. Hence the eager curiosity and intense interest with which spectacles of this description are always resorted to by numbers. Many, indeed, there are, who rather avoid than seek such spectacles, being unable to endure them without an agitation of their feelings too violent to be grateful. In such persons the conception of the sufferer's bodily pain so much predominates over every other idea, and so entirely fills their minds, as to preclude that gratification which the excitement of the scene imparts to others.*

The foregoing observations in explanation of sympathy relate almost exclusively to sympathy with *sorrow*, because therein is found the whole difficulty of the subject. The same principles, however, may easily be applied to explain our sympathy with *joy*, which appears not, after what has now been said, to require any further or separate discussion. But the process of thought in which we have represented sym-

* See Note L.

pathy to consist, is by no means confined to cases of joy and sorrow. Precisely the same process takes place with respect to all the feelings, dispositions, and sentiments of the human heart, and is the means by which we judge, in all particular instances, of their propriety, fitness, or reasonableness. By no other means, indeed, is it possible that we should acquire any knowledge, or form any judgment of each other's feelings. It is only our own feelings that we actually experience, and we can judge no otherwise of the feelings of another, than by imagining what our own would be in his situation. Sympathy, therefore, in every instance, is evidently nothing more than the exercise of imagination in endeavouring to conceive another's feelings. It is an operation of mind which claims peculiar attention, from its perpetual and necessary occurrence in the intercourse of life, and its important influence on our behaviour to one another. Living, as we do, in connexion with society, we are always deeply concerned in the feelings and sentiments of others, because on these depends their conduct to ourselves, by which our happiness may be so greatly hindered or promoted. Whenever we have occasion to

judge how they are likely to regard our own behaviour, or how they may be disposed to act in any given circumstances, that process of thought takes place, by which we transfer ourselves in fancy into their situation, and imagine how we should ourselves be disposed to act under the same circumstances. It is the conception of their resentment which deters us from injuring, or leads us to dread the vengeance of those we have injured. It is the conception of their gratitude, which most commonly induces us to acts of kindness, or assures us of the attachment and gratitude of those we have already served. The practice of estimating the feelings of others being thus begun in cases where we are ourselves interested, is naturally extended to those in which we are only unconcerned spectators. In observing another's conduct, we are always involuntarily led to imagine how we should ourselves feel and act in the same situation, and hence arises that feeling of propriety or impropriety, which is one important element of our moral sentiments. If the conduct observed be such as we are sensible our own would be in similar circumstances; if it manifest feelings which we know we should ourselves experience in the

same situation; we naturally approve of it as proper and reasonable. If, on the contrary, it evince a state of mind which we cannot at all realize to our conceptions; if it indicate feelings altogether discordant with those which we imagine would actuate ourselves in similar circumstances; we necessarily regard it with disapproving sentiments, as improper and contrary to reason. It is this principle of moral approbation, which holds so distinguished a place in the system of Dr. Adam Smith, and which he has so elegantly unfolded and illustrated in his "Theory of Moral Sentiments." No one, I think, can read that admirable work, which lays open some of the deepest recesses of the human heart, without admitting that the process of thought which he has described under the name of Sympathy, enters very largely into the composition of our moral sentiments. But though we admit the truth of all his statements and illustrations, there remains in the mind, upon closing the volume, a certain impression, that he has not gone to the root of the matter; that he has not considered the subject in a direct and simple point of view. And it will be found, in fact, upon a little reflection, that he has confounded an *instrumental pro-*

cess, with a *fundamental principle.* The mere conception of another's feelings would have no influence over us, unless there were some *prior cause* to render those feelings interesting to us. And had we not first been led by the desire of happiness, to think of and pay regard to the sentiments of others, the feelings of moral approbation or censure could never have had existence. According even to his own acknowledgement,* the mere concurrence or disagreement of another's feelings with our own is not always attended with a moral sentiment of approbation or the contrary. In matters of taste, or in matters of little consequence, we may observe the feelings of another to be altogether discordant with our own, without considering him on that account as deserving of blame. It is only in cases where the feelings which we observe, appear capable of *affecting the happiness* either of the individual himself or of others, that we regard those feelings with any thing approaching to a moral sentiment. The strength also of our moral sentiment is always exactly proportioned to the degree in which happiness may be affected by the feelings in question; so that *the consideration of what is*

* See the Theory of Moral Sentiments.—Part. I. Sec. i. Ch. 4.

conducive or hostile to happiness appears the essential constituent of our moral sentiments, and not the mere concurrence or disagreement of another's feelings with our own. Without, however, further anticipation, we shall now enter into that analysis, which we proposed, of our moral sentiments, and endeavour to take that more direct and simple view of the process of their formation, in which the celebrated theory we have been just considering appears to fail.

SECTION XX.

OF THE FORMATION OF MORAL SENTIMENTS.

The simple capacity of individual pleasure and pain we have all along assumed as the only original principle implanted in us by nature. Resentment of injuries and gratitude for benefits are evidently the natural and necessary result of this principle, and *in these feelings is contained the embryo of our moral sentiments.* They do not, I admit, amount of themselves to what can properly be denominated a moral sentiment; for even brutes, who know not the distinction between right and wrong, are yet susceptible in some degree of gratitude and

resentment. But man, by reason of his more enlarged capacity and closer social connexions, becomes necessarily interested, not only in the good or evil which happens to himself individually, but in that also which happens to his fellow men. We cannot but foresee that he who injures one is likely to inflict similar injury upon another; and that he, on the other hand, who benefits one, will probably behave with equal kindness to others. Is it then unaccountable, even upon the principle of self-love, that the fears of men should excite a general disapprobation of the former, and that their pleasing ideas of the kind and generous treatment which they would be likely to experience in all their dealings with the latter, should create towards him a universal feeling of esteem and approbation?* Thus we partake of one another's resentment and gratitude, and the general voice being uniformly raised in applause of justice and benevolence, and in condemnation of the opposite vices, lays a foundation for moral distinctions obvious to the most untutored of mankind, and which must ever remain, while there remains in human breasts a sensibility to benefits and wrongs. A general

* See Note M.

rule for judging of one another's conduct being thus formed and established by the influence, direct or indirect, of gratitude and resentment, will naturally be applied in all resembling cases; and though in those resembling cases there be no ground whatever for either hope or fear, the law of association will as naturally transfer to similar objects similar feelings. The step is not wide, nor abrupt, between apprehending the bare possibility of injury or annoyance from the evil passions of another, and merely conceiving that injury or annoyance in cases where we have no ground for apprehension; and the feeling of dislike which is excited in the one case, will naturally be excited, though in a feebler degree, in the other. This, as we have already seen, is no unusual process of the mind. It is a process which in numberless instances determines our sentiments of taste, and influences our feelings with respect to objects far less interesting to us than human actions. Why is it that we receive a sensible pleasure from the view of a rich, fertile, and well cultivated country, through which we are only travelling; or from the sight of a spacious, convenient, well-situated, and well-furnished mansion, which we are never

likely to inhabit; but merely by reason of those pleasing images of ease, plenty, and comfort, which they suggest to the fancy, as what we should enjoy, if these were actually the places of our abode? And whence that feeling of disgust which we experience at the view of a barren, flat, neglected country, or of a mean, small, ruinous, and filthy hovel, but from the unpleasant images of discomfort and inconvenience, which, in like manner, they present to our conceptions? If, then, mere inanimate objects can thus excite feelings of complacence or aversion, solely by means of this play of the imagination, can we wonder that human conduct, which is capable of affecting our happiness so much more deeply, should operate upon our minds in a similar way? Persons unaccustomed to reflect upon the operations of their own minds, can hardly be aware of the amazing subtlety of human thoughts, or of those delicate and rapid movements by which they work upon our feelings. They overlook the wonderful effect of association, which diffuses the influence of good and evil through a thousand secret channels, and transfers the emotions which they respectively excite to objects the most remotely connected

with them. We feel the charm imparted by the one, and the deformity arising from the other, but it is only in general by a very close scrutiny that we can trace our feelings to their primary source. Thus it is that our approbation of justice and benevolence, and our abhorrence of the opposite vices, though derived remotely from the regard which every individual feels for his own welfare, assume in their more advanced state a character of disinterestedness, which renders them so unlike their parent feeling, that they appear to superficial observation the result of instinct or intuition.

This account of the rise and growth of our moral sentiments respecting the social virtues of Justice and Benevolence, will apply in some measure to the personal virtues, such as Prudence, Industry, Temperance and Fortitude. The beneficial effects, indeed, of these qualities are confined for the most part to the individual who exercises them; and however natural it may be, that each should prize them in himself, on account of their manifest subservience to his own happiness, it may not be thought so easy to explain on the same principle our admiration of them in others. Mr. Hume, indeed,

expressly maintains that "it is more difficult, in a speculative way, to resolve into self-love the merit which we ascribe to the selfish virtues above mentioned, than that even of the social virtues, justice and benevolence." "As qualities," he adds, "which tend only to the utility of their possessor, without any reference to us or to the community, are yet esteemed and valued; by what theory or system can we account for this sentiment from self-love, or deduce it from that favourite origin."* The fact, I think, is, that we do not admire this class of virtues with the same warmth with which we admire the social virtues; nor do we ever feel the same strong indignation against indolence, imprudence, intemperance, or imbecility, as against cruelty, baseness, or injustice. The reason is that our moral sentiments respecting the one of these classes of virtues and vices, are derived from the strong feelings of gratitude and resentment; while our sentiments with respect to the other approach nearer to that calm feeling of approbation or dislike which accompanies the decisions of Taste. And though some may think, that when considered

* Hume's Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals. Sec. VI. Part I. (Essays. Vol. ii. p. 269.)

in this light, they still require, like all the other sentiments of Taste, the supposition of a peculiar instinct, sense, or faculty; yet a reference to the foregoing inquiries will sufficiently shew, that all such hypotheses are as needless as they are unsatisfactory. Without, however, referring to the foregoing inquiries, a slight exercise of reflection will make it evident, that Mr. Hume has created a difficulty which has no real existence, and embarrassed with sophistry a very plain subject. As the virtues in question evidently contribute to the health, the comfort, the security and prosperity of all who practise them, we naturally value them for their utility to ourselves, and are naturally pleased to observe them in all in whose welfare we are interested. If we admire them in others also for whom we are not particularly interested, this surely may be accounted for without the aid of an instinctive principle of humanity; since our feeling in this case is rather an abstract admiration of the qualities themselves, than the result of our regard for the welfare of their possessors. If order, neatness, symmetry, and spaciousness please us in a dwelling not our own, and where no direct subservience to our own good can possibly be pointed out, by reason

merely of the pleasing conceptions, which they excite, of comfort and convenience; no wonder that industry, prudence, temperance and fortitude in men should in like manner be equally pleasing to contemplate, though not in any way conducive to the welfare of the observer.

Hitherto we have considered our moral sentiments only in one point of view, namely, as they regard the conduct of others. There is, however, another point of view, in which they may be considered, namely, as a rule by which we regulate our own conduct; and the history of their formation in this view demands a distinct attention. The same principle, indeed, which leads us to share in one another's gratitude and resentment, and so to form a general rule for judging of one another's conduct, leads also, independently of the effects of education, to the formation by each individual of a rule of restraint to be imposed upon himself. If at any time the selfish passions of an individual dispose him to invade the security or property of another, the thought cannot fail to occur to him, that he has to encounter, not only the resentment of the sufferer, but the more formidable combined indignation of so-

ciety at large. He feels, therefore, that the restraint which he would impose upon others for his own security, he must impose upon himself for their's. Thus, independently of all instruction, the mere union of men in society must necessarily lead to the observance of some rude system of justice, without which not even a company of robbers can at all maintain their combination. It is the first lesson of law and morality, which there is no community of men so sunk in ignorance and stupidity, as not to have acquired; for it is obvious that, without some restraint from mutual injury and encroachment, the bands of society would be altogether loosened, and men, like savage beasts, must dwell remote from one another, or meet only to contend and to destroy. But the rule of moral restraint, as we find it in those who have enjoyed in any degree the advantages of a good education, is far from being founded on any such gross considerations as those above supposed. Originally, indeed, in all instances it springs from the desire of individual happiness; but by the influence of education and habit it becomes so refined and improved as to bear little resemblance to any selfish feeling. It has its earliest origin in those restraints which are imposed upon us by our parents or

attendants in the period of childhood. The infant has evidently no notion whatsoever of the necessity of any rule of conduct, but is carried away, without reflection, by every impulse of desire or passion. The injunctions of its parents or attendants form its first restraining principle, which operates only by the fear of punishment or the desire of reward. By the necessary influence of association, that displeasure which the child finds to be always attended with pain, denial, and restraint, becomes itself an object of aversion; and that favour, which procures him indulgence and gratification, becomes, in like manner, an object of desire. Thus originates the love of esteem, which continually acquires strength with increasing years, as experience affords continually fresh proofs of the advantages which arise from good repute, and of the disadvantages which attend disgrace. In proportion as our intercourse with mankind extends, our minds become more deeply impressed with the folly of attempting to gratify our own desires without regard to those of others. We find it necessary to our own happiness to accommodate ourselves to society. We find it necessary to divest ourselves of that exclusive regard to self which at first is natural to us,

and learn to regulate our behaviour by a reference to the sentiments of others.* Though, therefore, in some the principle of restraint may never advance beyond the fear of that general resentment which they know would be excited against them by any flagrant aggression upon the rights or security of others; though there may be some who are altogether insensible to the feelings of shame, and whom nothing can influence but the dread of actual punishment, yet this is the case with few. Few can behold with perfect indifference the looks of general indignation or contempt directed against them, even though assured that no more signal punishment will ever follow. The hatred of mankind is so obviously fraught with evil, so strongly inspires the fear of various ill offices, and deprives us of so many advantages which their services would otherwise impart; that few can feel easy under the consciousness of being its objects. The dread of shame or general reproach is, therefore, a principle of restraint which naturally operates with powerful influence upon all but the most hardened or abandoned of mankind; and it is only the self-same principle, improved or carried further, which constitutes the desire of positive esteem. But the desire

* See Note N.

of esteem is itself susceptible of different degrees of improvement. In some, it is the thirst of *actual* applause, the applause of the many, by whatever means it may chance to be obtained. Even under this form, it partakes, in some degree, of the nature of a moral principle, and has often prompted to acts of heroism or beneficence which have called forth the warmest admiration of mankind. But the virtues which it thus produces, can be only those of the public and popular kind. Obeying the maxims which are most in vogue, and aspiring to that character which is sure to gain the greatest general applause, it prompts to different modes of conduct in different countries, ages, sects and parties; and may even lead to vice, where vice, as sometimes happens, is recommended by fashion. Thus in Sparta it inspired a courage which no dangers could appal, a temperance which no pleasures could allure, and a fortitude which almost sported with hardship and pain; but obscured the lustre of these noble qualities by a cruelty, a haughtiness, a domineering spirit, and a narrow and exclusive patriotism, which enlightened reason and true morality cannot approve. In like manner, among a certain party, in a turbulent period of

English history, it produced a severity of manners, a solemnity of demeanour, and a pious strain of language, which would now appear ridiculous; while among the opposite faction, it prompted to an unrestrained licentiousness of manners, to which the prejudices of party had attached a false idea of dignity and honour. So extensively does this principle operate upon mankind, that some writers have represented it as operating universally; as the only principle which in any instance restrains from vice, and the true incitement which always secretly prompts to whatever appears the most exalted virtue. And when, indeed, we consider how few are capable of rising above the influence of established maxims or prevailing example; how few aspire to any higher excellence than that which suffices merely to secure them from reproach; and how often we find, upon a candid examination of our hearts, that we have been influenced by the love of human applause, where we fancied our motives were of the purest and most disinterested kind; this doctrine, however humiliating to our nature, must be acknowledged not destitute of some plausibility. But to admit it in its fullest extent, would betray an ignorance of the laws which

operate in the growth and improvement of human affections.—The desire of esteem may be well or ill directed. It may aim at applause of any kind, and coming from any quarter; or it may aim only at the approbation of the select few, whom we account the wise and good. Selection, indeed, of some kind, is almost unavoidable; for the least experience will serve to shew the impossibility of gaining the approbation of all: and when this selection is judiciously made, and leads us to confine our wishes to the esteem of those whose esteem alone is truly valuable, the desire in question will prompt to nothing but what is laudable, and will approach still nearer to the nature of a moral principle. When exposed to unjust censure, our thoughts will secretly revert to the more unprejudiced and enlightened suffrage of the wise and good; and though none of these may be actually present to observe us, the anticipation of their applause, when our conduct shall be made known to them, will support and console us under the present obloquy. From thus regarding, even in their absence, the opinion only of the wise and good, it is but another step, or hardly indeed at all a different thing, to be satisfied with merely deserving esteem.

Accustomed to observe the sentiments of others respecting us, and to regulate our conduct, both in their presence and in their absence, by a regard to those sentiments, we cannot divest ourselves in any circumstances of the habit of this consideration. Though no eye actually behold us, we cannot yet allow ourselves in any conduct which, if seen, would cause us shame; for imagination, that ever active and subtly-working faculty, peoples even solitude with visionary spectators, and kindles real blushes even at their pictured looks of scorn or censure. This, the reader will observe, is precisely the same process which we have so often had occasion to notice in tracing the growth of our tastes and affections. It is only another instance of that natural transition, by which, from loving whatever is *actually* productive of good, we proceed to regard with similar complacence whatever is only *capable* of being so. And if a mere shadow of fitness or convenience in things of no real importance to our happiness—of a fitness or convenience which we are never, but in fancy, to experience,—be sufficient to engage our favourable regards; no wonder that the mere capability alone of procuring esteem,—that good so truly and substantially

valuable, should strongly recommend those modes of conduct which appear to possess it. Thus, then, from the love of *esteem*, when guided by reason and confirmed by habit, is gradually generated the love of all that is *worthy of esteem;* and this is the love of *virtue.* This is that elevated principle of duty which actuates those who have been early trained and long habituated to study, to admire and practise whatever is excellent. And as we have already seen that, in the progress of human affections, means may not only come to be valued as ends, but may even supplant, in our regards, those very ends to which they were subservient; and a derived desire may acquire such strength as even to supersede the original desire which gave it birth; so this principle of duty, this abstract love of what is estimable, may overcome the love of actual esteem, inciting to the practice of virtue, not only in secret, where no honour is actually gained, but even in cases where adherence to rectitude will expose to the unjust censures of ignorance or prejudice.* It is from confining the attention to this most advanced state of the principle of duty, when it acts so independently of all interested consi-

* See Note O.

derations, that some have been led to consider it as the result of instinct or intuition. But from the foregoing analysis it appears, I trust, sufficiently evident, that our moral sentiments are the natural and necessary result of the desire of individual happiness, operating in combination with our social condition and enlarged capacities;—that the virtues are first of all *loved*, in cases where we are immediately interested, on account of their manifest subservience to our happiness; and then, in cases where we are unconcerned spectators, on account merely of the agreeable conceptions which they excite:—that the virtues are first of all *practised*, from the obvious necessity of paying, for the sake of our own security, some regard to the sentiments of others; and then, from the love of esteem, which grows by a natural progress into the love of all that is worthy of esteem.

This explanation sufficiently accounts for the general uniformity of the moral sentiments of men, while yet it leaves room for some diversity, as the case is actually found. As men are every where similarly circumstanced in the main, the sources of their happiness and

misery are likewise similar, and it is not possible that their moral sentiments should ever be materially different from what they are. At the same time they are liable to be differently modified by different degrees of knowledge, or modes of education; by different customs, laws, and institutions; by different prejudices of nation or of party. Hence may arise a *partial* perversion of moral principle: hence it may happen, that, in some few instances, what is criminal in one age or country may be accounted innocent or virtuous in another; but this diversity can never extend to a *total* disagreement, or an *entire* perversion. For virtue being essentially the means of happiness, and vice the necessary source of woe, the one cannot cease to be loved, nor the other to be hated, so long as the desire of happiness continues to actuate mankind. This requires to be more particularly remarked, in order to obviate the alarm which some have felt, lest our notions of right and wrong, being represented as entirely the offspring of education and circumstances, should appear to have no foundation in the nature of things, but to be altogether arbitrary and uncertain. It is this alarm which has called forth so many advocates in support of

the doctrine of intuitive moral principles, and prompted their zealous endeavours to establish morality on the basis of *necessary truth.* On that basis it *is* established, if it be allowed, as allowed, I think, it must be, that between virtue and happiness, vice and misery, there is a necessary and indissoluble connexion. But still it will remain true, that our notions of right and wrong are not the gift of inspiration, but the result of that capacity of pleasure and pain which is the only principle originally implanted in us by nature. The process of their formation may not always precisely accord with the foregoing representation; for the fact is, that most persons derive their moral sentiments from education, and are prepossessed, as it is well they should be, with an esteem for certain actions, and an abhorrence of others, long before they are capable of exercising their own reflections upon the tendency of those actions; and it is thus that moral truths acquire that firm hold of our minds, that familiarity and obviousness to our apprehensions, which causes them to appear, on a superficial view, the dictates of instinct or intuition. But doubtless it was the common experience of mankind, instructing them in the pursuit of happiness,

which first gave rise to moral distinctions; it is the same experience which still operates in individuals to confirm or modify the principles imbibed by education, and which must still be appealed to for guidance in our moral speculations.

CHAP. II.

OF THE CRITERION OF VIRTUE.

We proceed now to the second of those questions which have been stated as being involved in the Theory of Morals; namely, What is the best definition of virtue? or in other words, What is that essential characteristic which affords the best criterion by which we may distinguish virtue from vice?

Those who represent our moral sentiments as instinctive or intuitive in their origin, are only consistent with themselves in maintaining that our notions of right and wrong are *simple ideas* which admit of no definition.* It is probable, I think, that, in using this language, they have not sufficiently remarked a distinction, which it is particularly important in this place to attend to; I mean the distinction between the *general notion* of right and wrong, and the

* See Stewart's Outlines of Moral Philosophy.—p. 136—139. Price's Review of the Principal Questions in Morals. Ch. i.

feeling which arises on the observation of particular instances of either. If the term *simple* be applied to the latter, the propriety of the application will best be judged of by referring to the foregoing analysis of our moral sentiments. If resentment and gratitude, if the dislike which is felt for whatever threatens, or appears capable of inflicting injury, and the attachment inspired by whatever promises, or appears capable of conferring benefit;—if these be simple feelings, then undoubtedly the term is applicable to our moral sentiments of approbation and censure. All our feelings of pleasure or pain, of attachment or aversion, of hope or fear, from those of the lowest to those of the highest class, may be considered as simple in a certain sense, however multiplied or complex the associations from which they flow. We certainly are susceptible of moral sentiments, or experience the feelings of approbation or censure, long before we have begun to speculate upon the nature of virtue and vice in general; just we are susceptible of the pleasures of taste, long before we are able to trace them to their source, or to lay down general rules of criticism. In each case our feelings arise instantaneously on the presence of their respective

objects, and therefore appear, to a superficial view, like the simple and original perceptions of a sense. But a more careful attention to the subtle movements of thought will shew that they really arise from the secret influence of fleeting associations, and are only modifications of a more general and simple principle. The subject, however, with which we are now concerned, is, not the *feeling* of approbation or censure, as it arises in any particular instance, but the *general notion* of right and wrong, framed by induction from an enlarged survey of all the objects which these terms denote. With how little propriety the epithet *simple* can be applied to our ideas of virtue and vice, considered in this view, will be apparent from the following reflections.

Virtue and Vice are evidently general terms, including each a great variety of actions and dispositions; and it is inconceivable how any one can understand the meaning of these terms, or entertain in his mind the notions which they express, without referring to some of the particulars included in them. Let any one endeavour to analyse or explain his idea of virtue, and he will necessarily be led to think of or

mention various particular modes of acting or feeling, which are all comprised under that general name, such as, forgiving an injury, relieving distress, resisting strong allurements of pleasure, observing justice in opposition to interest, and the like. In proportion to the completeness and accuracy of this enumeration, his idea of virtue is complete and accurate; and the more defective the enumeration, the more vague and imperfect is that general idea. What is the idea of virtue in the mind of a child? It is the recollection of those actions or modes of conduct which he has found to obtain the favour of his parents, and includes little more than the idea of obeying their commands, and abstaining from quarrels with his little companions. What is the idea of virtue in the mind of a savage? It is a very imperfect, and in some respects, a very ill-assorted assemblage of more particular ideas, including some qualities or actions which we should rather class under the appellation of vice,—valour in fight, skill in hunting, contempt of pain and danger, hospitality to strangers, and implacable hatred towards his enemies, being almost the only qualities which he deems worthy of esteem. What is the idea of virtue in the mind of a

rustic, who, though ignorant and uncultivated, enjoys, by living in a more enlightened country, the advantage of hearing occasionally the precepts of a better morality? His enumeration will include the more obvious duties, and he will say that to be virtuous, is to be honest, to be sober, to be industrious, to speak the truth, to avoid profaneness, &c. But let him extend his description to minute particulars, and then let his more detailed ideas be compared with those of the enlightened moralist who has entered profoundly into the study of duty, reviewing it in all its branches, and discussing all its nice distinctions, and how vague and inaccurate, how poor and incomplete will his notion of virtue appear. How, then, can that be called a simple idea, which includes such a variety of more particular ideas, and such different assemblages of these in the minds of different men?* The question is, what is that *common quality*, which belongs, or is supposed to belong to all those modes of conduct which are included under the appellation of virtue? It is a fact which cannot be denied, that mankind are not universally agreed in their notions of right and wrong; and if one man approves what another

* See Note P.

condemns,—if actions in one age or country are allowed and practised, which in another would be visited with punishment or disgrace; where then will the appeal lie, or by what test shall we examine these conflicting opinions? If virtue admits of no definition, all argument or discussion respecting it is wholly excluded, and no other standard of right and wrong is left, than the arbitrary assertions of any who may claim for their own opinions the authority of nature. But a doctrine so unsatisfactory cannot easily be acquiesced in by any inquiring mind, and most moralists have accordingly proposed some definition of virtue, to serve as a guide in the investigation of duty. Without attempting a complete enumeration of all the definitions which have been proposed, it may be sufficient to observe that, if we make allowance for some mere differences of expression, where the same thing is meant in fact, all that are worthy of attention may be reduced to four;—the properties which they respectively select as constituting the essence of virtue, being these,—Conformity with the will of God; Conformity with Truth; Beneficial Tendency to the individual agent, and Beneficial Tendency to mankind at large.

That definition of virtue which represents it to consist in acting conformably with the will of God, seems to have been framed with a view chiefly to that inquiry respecting the *motives* to virtue, which will form the subject of the ensuing chapter. Considered simply as a definition of virtue, it cannot be approved, because, though virtue is undoubtedly agreeable to the will of God, this circumstance is rather an inference from its nature and tendency, than what serves to point it out to us in the first instance. We cannot know what is agreeable to the will of God, till after we have ascertained what is virtue. This definition, therefore, however true may be the statement which it involves, can evidently be of no service to us as a rule or criterion to guide us in our investigation of duty.

That definition which makes conformity with truth the essential characteristic of virtue, is equally liable to objection, as it is not in all instances applicable without a circuitous explanation. Every action must be construed as speaking a certain language, or expressing certain sentiments, and by the truth or falsehood of this language or these sentiments, the moral

character of the action must be estimated. But *actions* are not the only subjects of moral judgment; we approve or disapprove of *feelings* or *dispositions*, which have not yet manifested themselves in action, or which do not tend to action; and with respect to these the consideration of truth or falsehood furnishes a good *practical* criterion of virtue, though not founded on its essential characteristic. As every feeling, desire or passion, arises from some conception of good or evil, from some judgment concerning the value of certain objects, the probability of certain events, or the character or motives of certain persons, it seems the readiest way of estimating the moral character of such states of mind, to consider how far they are suitable to their objects; whether they arise from right or mistaken views; whether they are agreeable to truth and reason, or proceed from some illusions of imagination. Whatever feeling or state of mind is found to arise from attaching undue importance to things of trifling value; from overrating or underrating the probability of what is future; from imagining things which have no real existence, or overlooking things which have; that feeling or state of mind, whatever may be the immediate pleasure attending it,

may justly be considered deserving of censure, as involving the *danger* of future disappointments, if not of future crimes. On the other hand, to see things as they really are; to view every object in a just light; to form a right estimate of good and evil; to entertain no hopes or fears, no joys or sorrows, but such, and in such degree, as sober reason approves, is obviously the best security of happiness, and therefore a just indication of virtuous feeling. It is not, be it observed, the truth or falsehood of the feelings in question, which in itself constitutes the ground of our approbation or censure; for these sentiments can never arise but from some consideration, more or less distinct, of effects or tendencies upon happiness; and it is obvious that the feelings of another are often regarded as fallacious, without exciting censure, or just, without exciting praise. But there is so close a connexion, both in reality and in our imaginations, between the truth or falsehood of any feelings, and their good or evil tendency, that our views may rest, and often in fact do rest, in the former consideration; and it may always be judged a sufficient proof that any disposition is incompatible with virtue, to shew that it is inconsistent with truth.

This consideration of truth or falsehood has, accordingly, been taken as the criterion of right and wrong in many theories of morals, though couched under various forms of expression. It was the idea of Plato, when he represented virtue to consist "in that state of mind in which every faculty confines itself within its proper sphere, and performs its proper office with that precise degree of strength or vigour which belongs to it."* It was the idea of Aristotle, in describing virtue as the habit of mediocrity according to right reason, or the observing a due medium between two opposite extremes.† Of the moderns, Dr. Clarke, who maintains that virtue consists in the fitness of conduct to the eternal and necessary differences of things; Lord Shaftesbury, who places it in maintaining a proper balance of the affections; and Dr. Adam Smith, who makes the feelings of a supposed impartial spectator the measure of propriety or impropriety; these all appear to have had more or less distinctly in view the idea of distinguishing virtue by its conformity with truth, though Wollaston is, I believe, the only writer who has stated the definition of

* Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments.—Part VII. Sec. ii. Ch. 1.

† See Aristotle's Ethics, translated by Dr. Gillies.—Book II. Ch. 2.

virtue precisely in these terms. It is a criterion, I repeat it, of great practical use, and one which we shall often have occasion to employ in the detail and enforcement of duty; though it cannot be considered as a proper definition of virtue, because it points not out its essential characteristic.

The essential characteristic of virtue consists, most certainly, in its tendency to promote happiness; for it is the desire of happiness, as we have seen, which alone has led mankind to the knowledge of right and wrong, and independently of this object, there is no ground whatever for any preference of one course of conduct above another. Vice would cease to deserve our abhorrence, if it could possibly cease to be destructive of happiness; and virtue would no longer be entitled to our regard, if it could be shewn to be ultimately productive of misery. But among the writers who have insisted upon this as the most essential property of virtue, some have chosen the happiness of the *individual agent*, others the happiness of *mankind at large*, as the proper object to be had in view. This difference, so far as regards the present subject of inquiry, is evidently not

material, provided it be allowed, that what tends to the good of society, is also the highest interest of every individual. That this is, generally speaking, true, none will deny. For such is obviously our close connexion and mutual dependence, that whenever an attempt is made by an individual to promote his own happiness at the expense of the happiness of others, that attempt almost invariably defeats itself, and the injury which he inflicts, assuredly sooner or later recoils upon himself. It is plainly the interest of every individual to live in society; and living in society, it is equally plain, that his interest must be to observe that conduct which will best secure him from the resentment, and obtain for him the favour of others, which conduct will generally be found coincident with what duty dictates. Reserving, however, the fuller consideration of this subject for the following chapter, which will treat of the grounds of moral obligation, I observe that our judgment with respect to this difference will much depend upon the point of view in which the subject of moral duty is regarded. Some moralists, in laying down the rule of duty, confine their attention chiefly to *actions*. They treat Morality as a science

merely of Natural Jurisprudence, or of Casuistry. Considering man in his several relations, they give directions for his conduct in each, and dwell much upon certain difficult cases in which it is a matter of nicety to distinguish between right and wrong. The subjects of which they principally treat, are the rights of property, the laws of equity in promises, oaths, and contracts, the use and importance of marriage institutions, and other subjects of a similar kind. Now in all such discussions, it is very obvious that the end which we must chiefly look to for guidance in determining between right and wrong, is *the good of society.* The rule of duty, considered with reference to actions only, is a system of Natural Law, prohibiting certain modes of conduct, and enjoining others. And as laws of state are rules established, or supposed to be established, by the common consent of a people, for their common good, so the code of natural law represents the general sentiments of mankind respecting what ought to be allowed or forbidden, and cannot, therefore, be supposed to allow of any thing which, in any degree, or in its remotest tendency, is adverse to the general good. It must necessarily consist of general prohibitions and injunctions, and with-

out regard to particular cases, must forbid not only such actions as threaten obvious and immediate mischief to society, but those also which, though harmless in certain circumstances, it would yet be dangerous generally to allow. If in any case it should appear, that a certain mode of conduct would procure some important advantage to an individual, without any actual injury to others, which yet, if drawn into a precedent, and generally allowed and practised, would be productive of hurtful consequences to society; that conduct, as it is necessarily the object of disapprobation to all but the individual himself, must of course be forbidden by the rule of natural law, which cannot, it is evident, admit such particular exceptions, without defeating its own end, by allowing a pretext so evidently liable to abuse. The same disregard of particular cases and circumstances must be admitted in the code of natural law, even when the public good is the object consulted. We must even then be careful to proceed upon enlarged principles, and take into our consideration remote and general, not less than immediate and particular consequences. For it may happen, that a certain line of conduct shall be productive, in its im-

mediate consequences, of great public benefit, which yet, if allowed as a general principle, would lead to the most mischievous results. The death of a tyrant, for instance, whose conduct threatens the subversion of his country's laws and liberties, may be highly desirable as a means of averting that calamity; but it does not follow that it would be right to assassinate him; because, if such an action is allowable in one case, it is equally so in every similar case; and if it were admitted and acted upon as a general principle, that tyrants ought to be assassinated, how many a prince or statesman, altogether undeserving of such a fate, might fall a sacrifice to misjudging zeal for the public good. In order, therefore, to determine justly respecting the lawfulness or unlawfulness of actions, we must thus take into our account, not merely their consequences to the agent, but their consequences also to society; not merely their consequences even to society in any one particular instance, but their ultimate tendency when established as general principles of conduct.*

* See this subject very ably treated in Paley's Moral Philosophy.—Book II. Ch. vii. viii.

Discussions, however, of this kind belong only to that part of Moral Philosophy, which treats of actions in the abstract, and which may properly be distinguished by the name of Casuistry, or Natural Law. That more useful and important branch of Moral Science which is the subject of the present treatise, regards *dispositions* more than *actions ;* it proposes to ascertain that state of character, that mode of feeling and thinking, which is most approvable; and considers external actions only so far as they indicate the internal affections of the mind. This is evidently the most important view in which to consider the subject of human duty; for virtue, considered as a personal qualification, consists, not so much in conforming to certain rules of action, as in a proper state of the heart and affections. It depends not so much upon *how* we act, as upon what *principles*, from what *motives* we act. The outward conduct may be conformable to certain rules, while the inward dispositions are very far from being in that state which constitutes the virtuous character. It is to the latter, therefore, that we must chiefly attend in the study of human duty. This, in fact, is the Moralist's proper province. To look no farther than the outward conduct;

to regard actions independently of motives; and to lay down laws forbidding this and enjoining that, is the part more properly of the Legislator or Politician. The Moralist must go to the heart, and attend almost exclusively to the regulation of character. *Character* is the proper and peculiar subject of that science which alone, perhaps, deserves the name of Moral Philosophy.—Taking this view of the subject, we may with less hesitation pronounce that the interests of society and the interests of the individual are the same; for whatever the interests of society require, will be necessarily most agreeable to the taste and feelings of him *whose character is so formed as to afford the best possibility of individual happiness.* Benevolent dispositions are unquestionably, *upon the whole*, most conducive to individual enjoyment; and where such dispositions exist, nothing which interferes with the welfare of others, can ever be regarded as an object of desire. No error can, therefore, arise from fixing upon the happiness of the individual as the criterion of virtue, provided we properly determine the nature of this happiness. The truth, however, is, that in framing our definition of virtue we must consider both these objects in

conjunction. To a certain extent the happiness of the individual must necessarily be our only guide; because there are some virtues, the influence of which is so entirely confined to the individual who practises them, that a definition pointing solely to the welfare of society would hardly seem to include them in the list of virtues. But if ever in any instance private interest should appear to interfere with public, the latter, of course, should always be considered as of paramount importance, and in favour of that our rule of duty must be formed. The obligation of the individual to the observance of the rule in this case, is quite another subject of consideration, which we shall presently attend to; what we are now considering is, not the *obligation*, but the *rule* of virtue, which rule being framed according to the general sentiments, and with a view to the general welfare of mankind, can never countenance any conduct, or any principles, which are upon the whole injurious in their tendency, however expedient they may be in a few particular cases.

But here it naturally occurs to be inquired, how far this criterion of virtue will avail us in distinguishing between right and wrong. Is it

a standard so precise and determinate, as will serve to remove all difference in the moral sentiments of men, and enable us to draw a clear line of distinction between virtue and vice? A moment's consideration will suffice to shew, that this cannot reasonably be expected from any rule or criterion of virtue whatsoever. Diversities of sentiment respecting right and wrong do actually, we know, prevail to a certain extent, and must ever continue to prevail, so long at least as men continue to differ in their degrees of mental cultivation. The broader features of virtue and vice are obvious, indeed, to the most untutored of mankind, and cannot, under any circumstances, be altogether confounded. But to ascertain duty in all its detail; to perceive all the minuter distinctions between right and wrong; and to form a system of morality perfectly correct; requires a degree of reflection and discrimination, which can be expected only in enlightened minds. Mankind must necessarily approve whatever they clearly perceive to be conducive to their welfare; but the tendencies of actions are not always obvious, and men in one age or country or class may admit of conduct, which a more enlightened reason and a more extended

experience will afterwards or elsewhere condemn. Still, however, it must be admitted, that even the most enlightened reason and the most extended experience of mankind will never furnish so exact a standard or criterion of virtue, as will remove all possibility of dispute in particular cases. If laws of state, though worded with such laborious accuracy, and drawn out into such minute detail in the countless volumes of statutes and reports, are yet insufficient to prevent dispute or obviate doubt in questions of civil right; it may well be believed, that no system of moral precepts, however copious and complete, can draw with greater accuracy the boundaries of moral duty. That just regulation of the affections which duty requires, consists in retaining them in a mediate state equally remote from opposite extremes; and as degrees of moral qualities do not admit of being precisely stated, like the degrees of number or magnitude, it is seldom possible to determine with exactness this golden mean which constitutes virtue. And even were this possible, a difference of sentiment respecting the point of propriety would arise from the mere diversity of our natural dispositions. Every one has natu-

rally a greater fellow-feeling with those dispositions which resemble his own, than with those which are strange to his breast; and though he may allow, with respect to the former, that there is a certain extreme in which they would be blamable, he will be sure to differ with those of opposite character, as to the point where this extreme commences. Hence it will unavoidably happen, that what one man praises under the name of Prudence, another will stigmatize with the name of Timidity. What one man honours as a proof of Firmness, another will reprobate as a mark of Obstinacy. That degree of sensibility which to some appears amiable, to others will appear a pitiable weakness. And that imperturbed serenity of mind which some applaud as magnanimous Forbearance, will be despised by others as Apathy or Pusillanimity. Perhaps, indeed, it must be allowed, that there is no one degree of any moral quality, and no one combination of qualities, which is exclusively entitled to be considered as virtuous. As in objects of taste there are different kinds of beauty, which cannot well be compared, but which may each be admired without disparagement of the rest; so in human character there are different kinds of

excellence, which are all entitled to commendation in their proper sphere. As there is one beauty in wild and romantic scenery, and another in the tamer features of a fertile and cultivated country; one charm in the brightness of a summer's day, and another in the solemn spectacle of the nocturnal heavens; so in human character, there is one excellence in the dauntless and decided spirit, another in the soft and gentle; one merit in the ardent and enterprising mind, another in the cautious and circumspect; one deportment which is proper in men, another which becomes the different sphere and different character of woman. All that the moralist can do in detailing the precepts of duty, is to point out the several dispositions and passions to which our nature is subject, and the several faults into which they are apt to lead. And all that he can reasonably aim at in such representations, is, not to form the characters of all according to one certain model, but only to assist individuals of every character in avoiding the faults to which their several dispositions render them prone.

CHAP. III.

OF THE GROUNDS OF MORAL OBLIGATION.

The third great inquiry in the Theory of Morals relates to the nature and grounds of Moral Obligation. This is a very distinct inquiry from the foregoing, though the distinction has not always been observed with sufficient care. The former relates to the rule or criterion, by which we ascertain what is virtue. The present investigates the reasons or arguments, which enforce the practice of virtue, after it has been thus ascertained. The former directs us to the general sentiments and general welfare of mankind at large. The present supposes that we have to deal with individuals, and leads us to consider by what appeal we may enforce on every one the observance of that rule of conduct, which the former inquiry has led us to establish.*

In considering this question, it obviously occurs to be remarked, that the same argument

* See Note Q.

in recommendation of any act of virtue will operate differently on different minds. Exhibit a case of extreme distress to the man of kind and generous heart, and shew him that, by the gift of a certain sum, he may rescue a poor debtor from prison, and restore to his helpless family his indispensable services; and this alone will be to him a sufficient reason for opening his purse. But make the same representation to the hard-hearted miser, and he will be altogether unmoved, unless you can moreover convince him, that the act of charity to which you would persuade him, will tend in some way to his own advantage. Suppose that to a man of well-established principles and fixed habits of virtue, an opportunity occurs of greatly enriching himself by some act of secret fraud or meanness; and he will spurn with instant abhorrence the thought of committing it, disdaining to calculate a moment between the advantage and the danger, and influenced solely by the consideration that the deed is wrong. But suppose that the same opportunity occurs to one who has been left in utter ignorance of his duty, and trained by precept and example to practices of dishonesty; and if he abstain from the deed in question, it will only

be from seeing that the promised advantage is greatly outweighed by the danger of detection. It appears, then, evident, that the motive which will actually operate as a persuasive to any given course of conduct, depends altogether upon the character of the individual. But it is obvious to remark, that, though this course of conduct, abstractedly considered, be virtuous, or conformable to the rule of duty, so far as that rule relates to actions merely, it is virtuous in the particular case supposed, only when it proceeds from the more worthy motive. It is also to be observed, that each individual, in the cases supposed, is actuated, in some sense, by a regard to his own happiness; for the man of generous heart would do violence to his feelings, in returning a denial to the claims of misery; and the man of well-established principles and fixed habits of virtue would entirely lose his peace of mind, if he stooped to the offered act of secret baseness. In every individual the desire of his own happiness ever is and ever must be the primary spring of action; and the only difference between the virtuous and the vicious character is this, that the former connects his happiness with the happiness of others, and has a taste for the noblest,

purest, most enlarged and most permanent enjoyments; while the latter confines his attention exclusively to himself, and relishes no gratifications but those of the lowest kind.

These observations will lead us to a short and easy solution of the question which has been so warmly agitated respecting the ground of moral obligation. Those writers who represent moral obligation as a self-evident idea of which no account can be given;* or as "a relation which every one understands, but is too simple to admit of logical definition;"† or as a feeling involved in the perceptions of the moral sense,‡ or necessarily and immediately consequent upon the knowledge of what is beneficial to others, or agreeable to the will of God;—seem to have contemplated, without having duly analyzed, that state of mind which constitutes the motive of the highly improved character, who only requires to know that any action is morally wrong, or injurious to others, or forbidden by the divine law, and he will avoid it without further inquiry, because his own happiness is so closely associated in his mind with the observance of moral duty, with

* Dr. Price. † Dr. Reid. ‡ Dr. Hutcheson.

the happiness of others, or with obedience to the will of God, that they are become, in a manner, one and the same object. Those, on the other hand, who have represented self-interest as the ground of moral obligation, are not to be considered as thereby denying the existence of these elevated affections; they merely look to their origin, and regard them, not without reason, as only more improved forms or modifications of that desire of individual happiness which is inseparable from the nature of every sentient being, and the essential constituent of every motive to action.—Or else they consider the question in the following point of view:—Setting aside all consideration of what motive will actually operate upon men of highly improved moral character, they lay it down as a principle, that every individual is fully justified in the eye of reason, in following that course of conduct, which, upon the fullest and most enlarged view of his condition, shall appear most conducive to his happiness. "The only valuable end of existence," they allege, "is happiness;—for no person, if he had it in his option, would accept of existence, but upon condition of a preponderance of happiness;—and when existence ceases to be happy, it soon

ceases to be desirable." "Put the case," says the writer whose words I am quoting, "that existence in misery should be offered to any being, as a necessary means of good to others. No one would accept of the proposal, who did not expect that the delightful consciousness of his generous feeling, would counterbalance the misery to which he exposed himself.—But this is contrary to the hypothesis, which assumes the supposition of unalleviated misery.—And whatever," he adds, "some may have imagined, or how incorrectly soever they may have expressed themselves upon the subject, no axiom can be more indubitable than this, that existence in pure unalleviated misery cannot be the object of rational choice."* Admitting this principle, the truth of which cannot, I think, be reasonably denied, we must allow it as a necessary consequence, that the obligation to practise virtue rests ultimately on its tendency to promote the happiness of the individual. For this is the final argument, the ultimate reason, into which all other arguments, all other reasons in favour of virtue manifestly resolve themselves. If it be said that virtue ought to be practised because it is agreeable to

* Belsham's Elements of Moral Philosophy.—Section I.

the will of God; it is surely not unreasonable, though it may seem irreverent, to ask, why ought we to obey the will of God? and the answer to this inquiry brings us directly to the consideration of our own happiness as depending on the favour of God. If it be said that we ought to practise virtue, because it is right and reasonable and agreeable to the fitness of things; this is merely saying that we ought, because we ought. If it be said that we are bound to practise virtue, because it tends to the happiness of society, the reason certainly is not conclusive, because it has been shewn that a case may be supposed in which this consideration could not in fairness be expected to influence; and if any individual should think fit to ask, as he not unreasonably may, "why must I concern myself with the happiness of society?" the only reply which then remains, is to shew, if we can, that he best consults for his own welfare, by following that rule of conduct which is framed with a view to the general welfare. This being done, the inquiry must terminate, for no one, of course, can require a reason for pursuing his own happiness. The grounds on which this final argument in favour of virtue may be established, have already

been briefly stated in the foregoing chapter. But the subject demands here a fuller discussion, more especially as it involves the consideration of topics which hold a very conspicuous place in all writings and discourses on practical morality. Arguments to enforce the practice of virtue, and to dissuade from the practice of vice, form, it is well known, a principal subject of the eloquence of the pulpit, and are copiously enlarged upon in all practical treatises on human duty. It is evidently, therefore, important in the theory of morals to make them the subject of general review, and to consider their proper grounds and purport. Persuasion, it is obvious, can only be accomplished by appealing to that desire of happiness, which is inseparably inherent in every breast; and these arguments in recommendation of virtue would have neither force nor meaning, unless they tended to shew that it is the course which affords to every individual the surest means of happiness. That this holds true to a very great extent, even though we look no farther than the present life, has been so often, and so fully proved in the writings and discourses of practical moralists, that to dwell upon the argument at any length, would here have an air of trite-

ness and declamation. The danger which is incurred by him who in any way violates the rights or security of others; the embarrassments and fears which inevitably attend deceitful, fraudulent, or hypocritical conduct; the ruinous consequences to health and fortune which flow from immoderate indulgence in pleasure; the torment which arises from all malignant passions and discontented feelings;—are facts so obvious as need but to be mentioned to gain immediate acknowledgment. That the course of virtue is, upon the whole, the *safest* course, affording the best security against the various possibilities of evil, and requiring no material sacrifice of pleasure or of interest as the price of this security, is a truth repeatedly insisted on, and placed beyond all question. But this is evidently the least and lowest praise to which virtue is entitled. It possesses many unquestionable recommendations of a more positive kind. Is it not true, that industry is in general the necessary means of attaining whatever objects conduce to the comfort and enjoyment of life; and that competence, honour, and mental improvement are its usual and almost invariable rewards? Is it not true, that in the very pursuit of these

advantages we spend our time more happily than if our attention were never occupied by any useful or serious employment? Is it not true, that the man who tastes of pleasure in moderation, and takes it only as it comes unsought, experiences far more real enjoyment, than he who indulges in it without restraint, and pursues it as a leading object? Is it not evident, that he who entertains a just opinion of himself, and makes no undue claims upon the homage, and no laborious attempts to gain the applause of others, escapes unnumbered slights, mortifications and disappointments, which arrogance and vanity never fail to meet with? What comparison is there, in point of happiness, between him who broods perpetually upon the evils of his lot, and magnifies those evils far beyond their just proportion, and him whose cheerful temper disposes him always to view things on the bright side, and to make the most of all the advantages of his condition? Or which is the better fitted for passing through this chequered scene,—the man of fortitude, who bears up against misfortune, and never, under the most discouraging circumstances, resigns himself to despondence; or he, whose feeble mind

is appalled by every difficulty, sinks under every trial, and yields to despair under every reverse of fortune? Thus fortitude, contentment, humility, temperance, and industry, are evidently conducive to the happiness even of the present life; and if to these we add the virtue of benevolence, we open to ourselves a source of enjoyment as exquisite as it is inexhaustible—enjoyment which the man of selfish heart may not be able to appreciate, but which is far superior to any gratifications of which the selfish heart is capable. Such are, briefly, the topics of argument upon which practical moralists so largely dwell in seeking to enforce the observance of duty; and if there be any truth at all in these persuasions, they prove beyond a doubt, that, even independently of its consequences in futurity, virtue is our highest interest. The only cases in which it seems difficult to establish on this ground the obligation of virtue, are those where it involves the sacrifice of life, or the loss of possessions which are considered as essential to the enjoyment of life; as when a martyr or a patriot submits to death in the important cause for which he struggles; or a lover of truth resigns emoluments and honours for the sake of

opinions which he deems it his duty to avow. But a little attention to the proper principles of arguing in favour of virtue, will serve to shew, that these are hardly to be considered as exceptions to the general truth.

In arguing in favour of virtue, it is evidently of essential importance, that we should not confine our attention to a single action and its consequences, but consider the disposition or state of mind from which it flows, and the tendency of that disposition. Particular infringements of the rule of duty may not always be followed by any evil consequences of their own; or their consequences may not be such as we can foresee and point out. But let us look to the dispositions which such actions indicate, and we shall always find that they contain the seeds of future sorrow. A gainful act of fraud or meanness may be committed with so much secrecy and precaution as completely to elude detection; and its author may, therefore, appear, upon a limited view, to have safely furthered his own interest. But who will envy him his state of mind? Who does not see, that if he be capable of acting thus in one instance, he is capable of any similar transgression; and that though

he may *now* escape detection, he may not *always* be so fortunate? Who can deny that the spotless conscience of scrupulous integrity, with its entire freedom from all anxiety or fear, and its utter incapability of ever being tempted, by even the most favourable opportunity, to a deed of baseness, is a far more desirable state of mind, however obstructive it may sometimes prove to schemes of interest or ambition? In like manner a particular act of virtue may not be followed by any distinct advantage, but may be productive, on the contrary, of real and serious suffering; yet if the disposition from which it flows be *favourable in general to happiness*, it furnishes no just exception to the truth for which we are now contending.*

Again; in considering the inducements to virtue, it is necessary to attend to another important principle, namely, that there are different kinds of happiness, and different tastes corresponding to them. There is one happiness consisting in the enjoyments of sense, which is usually denoted by the term *pleasure;* another consisting in the gratifications of mental excitement, which we designate by the

* See Note R.

term *amusement;* another consisting in the acquirement and possession of wealth, to which is commonly applied the name of *interest.* There is a happiness also, distinct from these, which arises from being the object of esteem or admiration; another, of a higher kind, which is found in the exercise of the benevolent affections; a third, the highest of all, which consists in the applauding testimony of conscience, and the assurance of divine approbation. Now when we inquire whether virtue be always conducive to individual happiness, it is evident the term happiness requires some explanation, and we are necessarily led to consider the taste or dispositions of the individual to whom the inquiry may relate. If he be one who has no relish for any but the lowest of all gratifications, the gratifications of sense, and no dread of any evils but those of corporeal suffering, in vain shall we attempt to persuade him to virtue by appealing to those far nobler enjoyments of which higher minds are susceptible. To talk to him of the beauty of virtue, or the exquisite and refined gratifications of benevolence, would be to talk in a language as unintelligible to him, as a description of the beauties of music would be to one who "is not moved with con-

cord of sweet sounds." Even the lower inducements of interest or shame will fail to operate upon such a mind. The savage, who knows no higher gratification than that of slumbering or lying at his ease for days together in utter vacancy of thought, and who is only to be roused from his state of torpor by the pressing calls of hunger, would doubtless refuse to acknowledge, because he is incapable of understanding, the superior happiness which arises from the industry, order, and comforts of civilized life; and no representation of the advantages of wealth would induce him to relinquish the mode of life to which he is accustomed, however precarious, destitute, and wretched it may appear to us.* And among the members of civilized society, there are some, we know, so utterly insensible to feelings of shame, that disgrace is to them no evil, and the only motive which restrains them from crime, is the fear of punishment at the hands of public justice. Arguments, in order to be of any avail, must be addressed to the tastes and affections of the individual; and where the tastes and affections are fixed only upon objects of gross self-interest, none but motives of gross self-interest will have power to influence. Now such mo-

* See Note S.

tives, it is obvious, we cannot always offer in recommendation of virtue. We cannot say that it always confers, in the greatest degree, the pleasures of sense. We cannot say that it always proves the most effectual means of acquiring wealth. We cannot even allege with truth that it always conducts to the favour and esteem of men. Some cases there certainly are, in which we can appeal in its favour only to those feelings of enlarged generosity, or that elevated sense of duty, which are no where found but in men of highly cultivated and improved moral character. They whose breasts are inaccessible to such feelings, will of course be insensible to the force of such arguments; just as the savage is insensible to the advantages of wealth, or as the hardened knave is indifferent about the good opinion of the world. But though the argument, in either case, may fail to persuade, by reason of the perverted habits and tastes of the individual, and his consequent incapacity of duly appreciating a happiness really superior to his own, its validity in either case remains unimpaired. As there is ground for preferring the order, comforts, and regular industry of civilized life, to the destitute, wild, and precarious condition of savages,

though savages may wonder at our choice; as there is ground for affirming that the man who is alive to honour or disgrace, is in a better state of mind for his own happiness, than he who is regardless what others may think of him, though the latter may laugh at the scruples of the former; so there is equal ground for maintaining, that a mind which can be actuated by motives of pure benevolence, or persuaded to what is right by the mere knowledge that it is right, is better constituted even for its own enjoyment, than the mind which is insensible to these elevated motives. Nor will the case be altered, though these motives should lead to what are commonly considered as the greatest sacrifices. To a mind thus constituted, the loss of life itself will be a far less evil than the consciousness of having abandoned the path of honour and of duty. And if a man of this character be reduced, like Lindsey, to the painful alternative of either professing sentiments which his inward thoughts disown, or resigning honour and emolument for a state of precarious subsistence and virulent reproach, he will choose the least of two evils in choosing the latter, because his uneasiness in acting a dissembling part

is far less tolerable than any sufferings which may ensue from the open avowal of his sentiments. The generous citizen of Calais, who offered his life to save from the fury of an exasperated conqueror the lives and property of his fellow citizens, adopted doubtless that course of conduct which was most conducive to the happiness of so noble a mind; and even had the event been such as he expected, would have found in the applauding testimony of conscience, and in the short experience or mere anticipation of the gratitude of his countrymen, a full compensation for his generous sacrifice. And who, that is able at all to appreciate his feelings, will say that the lot of Eustace de St. Pierre would not have been, even in that case, enviable. Such heroic sacrifices, therefore, are not necessarily to be considered as exceptions to the doctrine that virtue, even in this life, is our highest interest. There is reason, indeed, to believe, that such sacrifices have often been made from motives which had no reference to a future state. The desire of fame has a thousand times triumphed, not only over the love of pleasure and of lucre, but over the love of life itself; and to the influence of this passion we may not

unfairly ascribe many of those acts of heroism and self-devotion, which are so much admired in patriots and martyrs. Instigated at first, perhaps, by that love of power which cannot endure the encroachments of power in others; or by that pride of opinion which naturally resists dictation; or by that ambition which aspires to "the glory of dictating the religious faith and opinions of multitudes;"*—they are engaged in honour to persist in the course which they have chosen, and to abide whatever consequences it may entail upon them. And though it involve them in the utmost perils; though it expose them to the loss of property, of liberty, or even of life itself; still they have only the alternative before them of suffering with honour, or escaping suffering only to incur disgrace: and how few are there to whom death with honour would not appear preferable to life with infamy.†

The sum, then, of our argument is this,—that no given course of conduct can be pronounced either conducive or adverse to the present happiness of an individual, without some reference to the state of his dispositions or cha-

* See Hume's History of England, Ch. xxix. (Vol. iv. p. 35.)

† See Note T.

racter;—that the comparison between virtue and vice, with respect to their influence upon happiness, must consist entirely in a comparison of *dispositions*, and their respective *general tendencies;*—and that the obligation to virtue, so far as regards the present life alone, can be established only to the extent of this plain truth, that a virtuous character affords, upon the whole, the best security from evil, the fairest prospect of happiness, and of such happiness as is incomparably the purest and most exquisite in kind. But to see virtue in its fullest importance, and to enforce it on the strongest grounds, it is undoubtedly necessary that we should extend our views to a future state. Without the expectation of a future state, there would be some ground, perhaps, for alleging, that moral principle, however useful in a certain degree, may yet be carried to an inconvenient extreme, and that a certain pliant and accommodating morality, which will bend to the temper of the times, and serve most effectually to secure respectability and wealth, is most advantageous to the individual. At any rate, in this case *the improvement of character* could never be reasonably stated or considered as the object of *supreme importance* in life, and consequently

the moral principle could never attain its highest state of culture.—But of the use and influence of religious views in connexion with the motives to virtue, I shall treat more fully hereafter. All, therefore, that now remains in this theoretic branch of our subject, is to consider the general purport and character of the arguments by which, in the ensuing practical part, the several duties may be enforced.

It appears, from the foregoing observations, that there are several kinds of argument which may be employed to recommend virtue and dissuade from vice, because there are different kinds of happiness, and different tastes or affections to which our appeal may be made. It also appears that it is far from being a matter of indifference by what kind of argument we may be persuaded to what is right, since he who can be influenced only by motives of gross self-interest, is obviously a very imperfect and unamiable character. Nevertheless it must be admitted, and the usual practice of moral writers will warrant the principle, that no kind of argument which the subject allows, should be altogether neglected. Nothing is more common in the writings or discources of practi-

cal moralists, than arguments against fraud or injustice founded on the personal danger attending such practices, and dissuasions from intemperance drawn from its hurtful effects upon health; and what is this but making an appeal to the lowest principle of selfish prudence? Nor is the number small of those to whom such appeals are necessary; for who can boast entire superiority to the allurements of sensual pleasure, and is not sensible how oft he needs to be admonished of the painful consequences of excess, in order to fortify his self-denial? To act from a foresight of distant dangers, so as not to be carried away by the impulse of immediate sensations, is evidently a step towards moral improvement, though it proceed from an entirely selfish motive. This, therefore, is an argument which I shall not scruple to employ, when necessary, though its obviousness is such as to render any enlargement upon it generally needless.

Another kind of argument sometimes employed by moralists, and demanding some consideration, is that which aims to combat one disposition by the aid of another, or to kindle some desire or passion not altogether of the

best kind, in order to subdue another of more pernicious tendency. Thus we hold out the advantages of wealth to rouse the slothful to exertion; or we inspire a regard to reputation as a preservative from baseness; or offer motives of ambition to correct the love of pleasure. Of this kind is the following argument against indolence:

> "If splendour charm not, yet avoid the scorn
> Which treads on lowly stations. Think of some
> Assiduous booby mounting o'er your head,
> And thence with saucy grandeur looking down:
> Think of (Reflection's stab!) the pitying friend,
> With shoulder shrugged, and sorry."

This kind of exhortation would perhaps have been stigmatized by Dr. Johnson as a "dangerous and empirical morality, which cures one vice by means of another;" or as a sort of desperate expedient which may be compared to the use of poisoned arrows against a lawless enemy.* But though undoubtedly it should be used with caution, as tending to inflame passions which more commonly require to be restrained than encouraged, yet it may sometimes be employed with advantage, and ought not, therefore, to be entirely rejected. For surely the desire of wealth, and the regard for

* See Note U.

reputation, are not in themselves criminal dispositions; they are criminal only when carried to excess: and when any one shews an utter insensibility to these objects, and has no taste for any but the lowest gratifications, something is gained towards the improvement of his character, and the augmentation of his happiness, if we can substitute these dispositions in the room of his grovelling propensities. Respecting the love of esteem in particular—it is a passion so deeply implanted in the human breast, so powerful and almost universal in its influence, and at the same time so allowable and even laudable to a certain extent, that all moralists have more or less employed it as a means of persuasion, and that with obvious advantage and propriety; for to implant the love of esteem in the breast which has been hitherto sensible only of the charms of pleasure; or to inspire some regard to character in one who has hitherto been actuated solely by a thirst of lucre, shameless and unscrupulous about the means it employs, is evidently to produce some improvement of character, though the improvement may fall short of what might be wished.

But such arguments, though occasionally useful in particular cases, are foreign to the general scope of the moralist's persuasions, whose business it is to aim at the highest improvement of character, to point out the due regulation of all the affections and propensities of human nature, and to reduce them all under just subordination to the principle of duty. This he generally endeavours to accomplish by exhibiting the evil tendencies of all wrong or immoderate dispositions: but in doing this, it would be tedious and useless always to go back to the first principles of moral obligation, as if he were arguing upon a point which admitted of dispute. Something must generally be assumed, and it is sufficient as a proof of the guilt, and an argument for the correction of any undue propensity, to shew that its tendency is to lead to crimes, assuming that those to whom the appeal is made, will acknowledge the evil of the crimes mentioned, and dread the danger of being led to commit them.

But as it is the object of the practical moralist, not merely to establish certain rules of conduct, but to rectify the inward dispositions; not merely to shew the pernicious tendency of vice, but to cut off its source by promoting right

habits of feeling and thinking; the best kind of argument he can employ, is that which was hinted at on a former occasion, in speaking of those theories of morals which represent conformity with truth as the essential characteristic of virtue—the argument which aims at the correction of any wrong disposition by shewing that it is groundless or unreasonable; that it proceeds upon mistaken views, or is disproportioned to the real value or importance of its objects. Thus we combat, for example, the inordinate thirst for fame, by shewing how erroneously it estimates the worth of its object; how uncertain the acquisition, how precarious the enjoyment of popular applause; how much the best earned fame is imbittered by envy, and how surely disappointment and mortification are incurred, whenever praise is too assiduously sought. Thus also we represent the unreasonableness of a discontented temper in overlooking the blessings and attending exclusively to the evils of its lot; in forgetting the universal mixture of good and evil in every condition of human life, and entertaining the fond expectation of escaping by a change of circumstances from that portion of care which is the inevitable lot of all. These appeals to the

reason of men are perhaps the best of all arguments which can be offered for the enforcement of moral precepts, and certainly they are the most appropriate to that morality which aims to regulate, not only the external conduct, but the inward affections of the heart. For they operate not merely as *persuasives*, but as *correctives* also. They tend to create that proper frame of mind, that just valuation of things, that truth of conception and rectitude of feeling, which constitute, far more than the mere observance of any given rule, the virtuous character.

Sometimes the arguments of the practical moralist consist not only in an appeal to the reason, but in an appeal to the equity of men. Thus, in order to enforce the obligation to a life of usefulness, we urge the consideration of those important benefits which every one derives from his connexion with society, and the consequent claim which society has upon the services of all its members. In recommendation of forbearance, forgiveness, and candour, we represent the unfairness of refusing to others, what the slightest inspection of our own hearts must convince us that we need so frequently

ourselves, and expose the injustice, as well as the unreasonableness, of all resentful and malignant passions, in aggravating what is blamable, misinterpreting what is innocent, and overlooking all favourable or extenuating circumstances in the character or conduct of their objects. These arguments, it is evident, are not final in their nature; they reach not the first principles of moral obligation; but assume that the obligations of justice are already acknowledged and felt. But as few minds are wholly destitute of a sense of equity, few will be altogether insensible to such appeals.

Sometimes, however, we shall be under the necessity of assuming even more than this; for after all, there are many parts of the subject which scarcely admit of any argument beyond what consists in a lively description of virtuous qualities, which supposes that those to whom the appeal is made, have minds attuned in some degree to virtue, and not altogether unacquainted with its feelings. Thus only shall we attempt to recommend the higher orders or degrees of moral excellence. The warm emotions of benevolence, the nice perceptions of sympathy, the expanded heart of enlightened

liberality, the open bosom which abhors concealment, the upright mind which scorns a double part, the godlike spirit of generous forgiveness, the elevated feelings of rational piety, can be justly appreciated or fully understood by those only who in some degree have known them by experience. The description is all that can reasonably be attempted; and if that should fail to excite admiration, and create no desire to realize the portrait, it is not in argument that a remedy can be found. To attempt to descend to the level of the lowest minds, and to reason in behalf of these elevated virtues on their own narrow principles of selfish interest, would be as fruitless as it would certainly be tedious and disgusting. To talk to a voluptuary of the elevated feelings of pity, to the hard-hearted miser of the refined gratifications of benevolence, or to the reprobate thief of the pure satisfactions of a heart unacquainted with guile, would be like discoursing to the savage of the advantages of civilization, or enlarging upon the pleasures of a literary taste to the rude uninstructed rustic. It is an excellent rule laid down by Paley, that many things are to be done and abstained from solely for the sake of habit, which rule he illustrates

by supposing that, to a person brought up from his infancy with a dread of lying, an opportunity occurs of creating diversion by a falsehood which appears entirely harmless; and by urging, as a reason for avoiding such falsehood, the tendency it would have to impair his habitual regard to truth.* It is a consideration unquestionably just and important, and if pursued through all its applications, will go far to prove the identity of the highest virtue with the highest interest of every individual. But it is evidently a consideration of much too refined a nature to influence every mind. It supposes a sense of duty and a habit of truth to be already in some degree established in the mind, and appeals to that wish for moral improvement, which is itself a proof of some improvement having been already made.

With respect to that argument in favour of virtue which is founded on the doctrine of a future state,—though it is well calculated to add a general sanction to the obligations of morality, yet to bring it forward in the enforcement of every particular duty, would not only involve a tedious repetition, but would be in itself of

* Paley's Moral Philosophy.—Book I. Ch. vii.—See Note U.

little avail, because our ideas of futurity are too vague and indistinct to operate upon the mind with the same force as the consequences of our conduct in this present world. Or if imagination lend terrors to futurity of sufficient power to influence the conduct, those terrors may deter from the commission of certain actions, but can never implant the feelings and dispositions of virtue; as the rod may terrify a child to obedience, but can never inspire the willing obedience of the heart. In one case only the appeal to futurity will be required to enforce the precepts of duty;—I mean when those precepts relate to the proper endurance of the ills of life, which naturally lead the mind to the hope of futurity, and which cannot, without this hope, be viewed in their true light, or borne with a right frame of mind. Independently, however, of these considerations, I have a peculiar reason for seeking the topics of moral persuasion chiefly within the limits of actual experience; for as it is my design to consider the moral constitution of man as a natural evidence of a future state, it would have been inconsistent with my plan to refer to this doctrine, before shewing, through all its parts, that system of duty, and those

inducements to its observance, which are pointed out to us in the circumstances of our present condition.

BOOK II.

PRACTICAL MORALITY.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

THE title of Practical Morality, as used in this treatise, comprehends the detail and description of all the particular feelings, dispositions, and modes of conduct, which respectively constitute virtue and vice, together with such representations of their respective tendencies, as may serve to recommend the one and dissuade from the other. It will not, however, include, as it usually does, that distinct set of duties which are called Instrumental Duties. These, in the present work, will form the subject of another book, under the title of Disciplinary Morality.

In order to ascertain the means of happiness, which is the object, as we have seen, of the rules of duty, we must observe the circumstances of that condition in which nature has

placed us; we must consider the wants which we have to supply, the evils which we have to obviate, and the several relations or connexions in which we stand to one another. From this review it will appear obvious, that, in order to our attaining happiness in the state in which we are placed, something must be *done*, and something also must be *forborne*. We cannot rest in total inaction, without depriving ourselves of the means of existence, or of all that renders existence valuable; nor can we resign ourselves to the impulse of every desire or passion which chances to arise within us, without exposing ourselves to evils and dangers equally formidable. The duties of human life are, therefore, either *duties of action*, or *duties of restraint;* and this points out the most obvious and natural order in which to consider them. The most common arrangement is, to divide them into three great classes, according as they relate to God, to our fellow creatures, or to ourselves. But this arrangement appears to me objectionable, on the ground, that there is scarcely any duty which may not, in some point of view, appear reducible under any of these three classes, since there is no habit or disposition the influence of which may not extend to

others, and since whatever is a duty to ourselves or others, is equally a duty to the Divine Being. The ancient arrangement of the duties under the four heads of Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude, is more distinct, but defective, inasmuch as it omits, or at least brings not forward with due prominence, the great leading duties of Industry and Beneficence. The order which I propose to observe in this treatise is as follows:—First, I shall consider the several duties of life in a general view, without reference to any particular passion or propensity, under the two heads of *General Duties of Action*, and *General Duties of Restraint*, the former including Industry and Beneficence, the latter comprehending Prudence, Justice, Veracity, and Moderation. After this general survey of duty as it regards our desires and passions collectively, I shall proceed to a more particular detail of the rules of conduct as they relate to each affection or principle of action considered separately. The *Desires* of Pleasure, of Wealth, of Honour, and of Power, will first be reviewed in the order here mentioned. Next I shall point out the due regulation of the *Affections*, meaning by that term the benevolent affections, which include the

attachments of Kindred, Friendship, Patriotism, Gratitude, and Sympathy. The *Passions*, peculiarly so called, or those more violent emotions or perturbations of mind which are excited by evils and injuries, will next claim our attention; and lastly the *Religious Affections.*

CHAP. I.

GENERAL DUTIES OF ACTION.

To be constantly employed in some pursuit useful either to ourselves or others, is obviously the first dictate of Morality. All have, or should have, something to do, and to this in the first place must our attention be directed, whenever we apply ourselves to the consideration of our duty. Other duties are only occasional; but this is the duty of every moment, the fulfilment of which may be said to form the groundwork and pre-requisite of all other virtues; for so long as we neglect the proper business of our station, all other virtues are out of place. The active duties may be, in a general view, distinguished into two classes, according as they regard our own welfare, or the welfare of others; the former being signified by the name of Industry, the other by that of Beneficence or Usefulness. The distinction cannot, indeed, be very clearly marked; for Industry, as exercised for the support of a family or the benefit of one's immediate connexions, borders nearly upon the virtue of Beneficence. Still there is

a general distinction of this kind, and it will be convenient to observe it, as far as possible, in the consideration of the active duties. Under these two heads, then, I shall first point out the several objects of employment, with their respective recommendations, and in a third section subjoin the description of certain qualities or habits, which are conducive to the right discharge of active duty generally.

SECTION I.

OF INDUSTRY.

To the great majority of mankind employment is obviously necessary as a means of subsistence. It is a duty pointed out to us in the constitution of nature, and the general circumstances of man's condition on earth. It is the great tenure on which our race at large hold their very existence. For we are so framed, and so situated, that without our own exertions we should soon perish for want of the necessaries of life. The earth which we inhabit, though capable of yielding in profuse abundance whatever is needful for our support and comfort, requires, however, the labour of man's hand to draw forth in due sufficiency its hidden stores.

Without his care to improve and cultivate, it would be little better than a barren waste, and the forest or the swamp would still occupy the scenes, where now we find fields rich with the waving harvest, or cities swarming with population and stored with all the necessaries and conveniences of life. Though in some few favoured regions nature may have so tempered the climate and so lavishly scattered her bounties, that life, at least in a savage state, may be supported there with little effort; yet existence itself in by far the greater portion of the earth, and in every region the acquirement of those various comforts which civilized man requires, is dependent by nature on our own exertions. "By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou earn thy bread," is obviously the great law of man's condition; and it is a law which operates equally in the rudest, and in the most advanced and civilized periods of society. For with the increase of civilization our wants also increase, and though few in proportion may now be occupied in raising the supplies indispensable to life, still a vast variety of arts, trades, and professions furnish abundant employment, either of the hand or head, to all classes of the community. The multifarious business of society

is subdivided and distributed through countless hands, and to every individual some part belongs, by his performance of which he purchases his share of the riches raised by the united labours of the whole. Some few, indeed, there are, whose circumstances are such as to place them beyond the necessity of toiling for subsistence. But to those who are neither enriched by fortune, nor rendered by age or sex dependent on others, the want of industry must always be productive of evil consequences too obvious and formidable to need any enlargement. If instances may be found of persons whose reluctance to exertion, even the prospect of embarrassment, indigence, debt, and ruin cannot overcome, they are cases manifestly beyond the reach of all the moralist's persuasions. And as for those whose condition is such as to remove them beyond the influence of this great motive to exertion, there are not wanting other objects to engage their diligent pursuit, and other arguments to enforce upon them the obligation of industry. To each sex, to every age, to every rank of life belongs some appropriate employment, and none can resign themselves to slothful indulgence without incurring some serious evil, or

losing some desirable good. In every human breast there is some desire, in every condition some room for improvement; and it is obvious that, of all the objects which mankind are wont to value, whether affluence, or distinction, or power, or mental attainments, none can be purchased but at the price of industry. Motives, indeed, of a higher nature than those which regard mere personal advantage, should prompt and direct the exertions of those whose time is at their own disposal; for all are bound, as hereafter will appear, to render themselves in some way useful to society. But if higher motives fail to influence, inferior objects may not improperly be held forth as inducements to exertion, since any employment, provided only it be innocent, is preferable to a state of total inaction. Without, however, enlarging in recommendation of objects which mankind of themselves are sufficiently disposed to seek, and their desires of which more frequently require to be restrained than excited, let it suffice to notice more particularly one object of employment, which may be recommended without reserve, and which calls for the attention of all without exception; I mean *the improvement of the mind.* To the young this is

obviously a business of peculiar and primary importance, as nothing claims their care at present, but the task of preparation for future years: but it belongs, in some degree, to every period and every condition of life, and should be followed by all to the fullest extent which is consistent with the discharge of other duties. It must never, indeed, supersede or obstruct the more important business of providing the means of subsistence, or fulfilling the claims which others may have upon our time or labour; but it should always be kept in view, and reserved for those periods of leisure which are seldom altogether wanting even in the busiest life. For great beyond dispute are the advantages of a cultivated mind, whether regarded as a means of personal enjoyment, or as contributing to extend our power of usefulness. That wider range of thought, that boundless store of interesting subjects of converse and reflection, that enlargement of views and superiority to vulgar prejudices, which belong to an enlightened and well-informed mind, are never-failing sources of the purest enjoyments, which they only who have experienced them, can justly appreciate. But these are its least advantages. It is important in a much higher

degree as a guardian of virtue, and a qualification for success in all the important pursuits of life. Between ignorance and vice there is a close connexion; for the mind which is entirely rude and uncultivated must be destitute of all just notions of duty, and incapable of relishing any but low and grovelling enjoyments. And though it must be admitted that knowledge and virtue do not always go hand in hand, yet it is undeniable that mental improvement is an important step towards moral improvement, and that he who is imbued with a taste for liberal studies, particularly if they be such as relate more immediately to morals or religion, may reasonably be expected to have his passions more under control, and his tastes and sentiments more inclined to virtue, than one whose mind is altogether uncultivated. This advantage he at least possesses, that he is furnished with a blameless occupation for periods of leisure, which might otherwise be lost in sloth, or worse than lost in the pursuit of guilty pleasures. But granting that knowledge is sought and applied, as it ever should be, in subservience to moral principle, its utility in that case is great and manifest. For the man whose mind is enlightened and improved, is evidently

better fitted for discharging with propriety the duties of whatever station he may occupy, and is rendered, in every relation, a more efficient and useful member of society. As a parent, he is better qualified for the difficult and momentous task of education. As a friend, his company is more attractive, his conversation more improving, his counsel more valuable. In business, his superior information and discernment will greatly add to the efficacy of his industry. In religion or politics, his enlarged mind will rise superior to the narrow prejudices of sect or party. And if he be placed in a station of authority, or called to act a part on the theatre of public life, where ignorance would assuredly fall into errors productive of the greatest mischief, his enlightened views and extensive knowledge, under the guidance of upright principles, will render him a safe guardian of the public welfare, if not an instrument of signal benefit to his country or mankind.—If it be clear, then, that the improvement of the mind is a highly important object of pursuit, it is equally clear that industry is necessary to pursue it with success. Application, without the aid of any extraordinary talents, may accomplish much. But the greatest talents,

without application, can make but little progress in the attainment of useful knowledge. Idle curiosity, ever intent upon what is new, may glance, indeed, with hasty survey, over the results of others' labour, and gain a superficial knowledge; but no solid or important attainments can be made, but by the steady efforts of persevering industry. All who have rendered themselves illustrious as benefactors or instructors of mankind, have owed this high distinction to their industry as much as to their talents. But even the most common acquirements, the most ordinary accomplishments, which barely raise us to the level of cultivated society, are beyond the reach of those who shrink from all exertion. There is no "royal road" to any kind of useful learning, and the commanding heights of knowledge were never yet ascended without the toil of climbing. He, therefore, who is truly wise, will neglect no opportunity, which his situation affords, of advancing in intellectual improvement. Next to the indispensable duty of providing for the wants of life, and fulfilling all the claims of those who are dependent on him, he will regard the cultivation of his mind as an object

of the highest moment, and to this pursuit he will sedulously devote his hours of leisure.

Industry may be further recommended, not only as the necessary means of procuring the valuable advantages which have been mentioned, but as itself a source of enjoyment, independently of its fruits. To be actively employed, is the only way by which we can truly enjoy life. Amid all the numerous tribe of human ills, there is no greater foe to happiness than sloth. For to say nothing of its remoter consequences, even in its immediate effects upon the mind it is most injurious. It is the bane of cheerfulness, the parent of perpetual vexation and care. Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that the slothful lose that very object which is all their aim. "Ease," it has been well observed, "must ask the leave of Diligence to be enjoyed." It is labour only that procures leisure, and gives its charm to rest; whilst indolence creates a continual necessity for labour, by the accumulation, which it occasions, of neglected duties, and renders the mind restless and uneasy from the confusion in which it involves our business. When,

moreover, we have no pursuit to engage and interest us, time itself becomes a burden, and spleen, with all its train of torments, takes possession of the listless breast. As weeds and brambles in the neglected garden, so a variety of idle fancies, strange whims, and chimerical wishes, overrun and occupy the vacant mind. It ponders on fancied evils, cherishes groundless apprehensions, conceives the most extravagant desires, and becomes the sport of a thousand vain illusions of imagination. The best remedy for these formidable evils, is constant employment in some *laudable* pursuit, which conduces to cheerfulness and contentment of mind, because it inspires a tranquil satisfaction arising from the pleasing consciousness that all our duties are discharged, and that all our affairs are proceeding in a right train; and which, by banishing all vague thoughts, chimerical fancies, and groundless feelings, and giving to all our faculties that exercise which is necessary to their healthful state, secures, so far as human care can avail to secure, that most essential requisite of happiness, a sound mind in a sound body. But *any* employment, provided only it be innocent, is better, as already observed, than total inaction; as it may serve

to secure us from other evils, of a far more serious nature, which yet remain to be mentioned.

It is a trite, but a very just observation, that idleness is the parent of almost every crime. It leaves the mind exposed to the attack of numberless temptations, and deprives it of its best security. Formed as we are by nature with a restless propensity, which renders total inaction intolerably irksome, we are ever seeking something which may interest our passions, and engage our zealous pursuit; and if this desire of action be not directed to honourable and useful objects, it will assuredly find the means of gratification in forbidden and dangerous courses. Seldom, therefore, can the indolent rest satisfied with that utter vacancy of thought and want of occupation, which would keep them equally from mischief and from good; but eagerly they grasp at every amusement which may impart a pleasing excitation to their listless minds. When, however, amusement is the only object, to keep within the bounds of innocence is no easy task. The round of blameless pleasures will soon grow tiresome, and the eager quest of new resources

will inevitably lead to what is vicious. Hence it almost invariably happens, that sloth is accompanied with the immoderate love of pleasure. To relieve themselves of the intolerable burden of time, the indolent too often fly to sensual gratifications, and plunge deeply into those pursuits of folly, which degrade their minds, consume their substance, undermine their health, and render them pests to themselves and to society. Sometimes even a darker abyss of guilt and misery awaits the votaries of sloth. For not unfrequently it happens, that, reduced to difficulties by their own neglect, thirsting for the gratifications which they have lost the means of procuring, and thus eager still for gain, which yet they are unwilling to seek by honest industry, they have recourse to desperate expedients to attain their ends. Hence those secret arts of fraud, which, though for a time successful, rarely fail to end in infamy and ruin. Hence the infatuation of the gamester's conduct, who risks his all upon the fortune of a moment, but plunged thereby into deeper embarrassment, is driven at last to end his misery by that rash act at which our nature shudders. Hence the still more melancholy fate of those, who, bidding bold defiance to the laws of

society, sally forth in darkness to deeds of outrage, till, seized by the arm of public justice, they perish by a death of ignominy. This may appear an exaggerated picture; but many a criminal has himself acknowledged, that the commencement of his career of guilt, the source to which his crimes and miseries might all be traced, was idleness.

We have now seen that active employment is a duty which is obviously pointed out to us by the laws of nature, and enforced on the great majority of mankind as the necessary means of procuring subsistence, and all those comforts and advantages which are natural objects of human desire. We have seen how this duty may be further recommended by the consideration, that employment in itself is conducive to happiness, and that idleness not only engenders spleen, and renders life insupportably tedious, but presents moreover the most dangerous temptations, and is too often the source of crimes far more heinous than itself, and miseries far more poignant than its own. We are now, however, to take a higher view of the duty of industry; to propose higher objects and nobler motives of employment than the

good of the individual, which has hitherto chiefly engaged our attention;—we are now to shew that it is our duty to be active, not only for *ourselves*, but for *others*.

SECTION II.

OF BENEFICENCE OR USEFULNESS.

The condition of human nature shews not more plainly the necessity of exertion, than it teaches us the duty of ministering to each other's happiness. We are eminently a social race. By necessity, by inclination, by various ties of kindred, of friendship, of neighbourhood, of country, we are bound together in social union, and all the comforts by which we are surrounded declare our mutual dependance. In what a state of utter helplessness are we first introduced into the world! Through how long a period are we wholly dependant on the care and kindness of others! And even when we have attained the full maturity of our faculties, how destitute would our condition be, without the continued assistance of our fellow men! Our food, our raiment, our dwellings, nay, even our simplest articles of conve-

nience, are results to which thousands have contributed their labour; and though not procured without our own exertions, yet how far superior to what could be accomplished by the efforts of any solitary, unassisted individual!* Look where we will through human society, we cannot find the man who is unconnected with and independent on the rest of mankind; whose resources are all within himself; who is beholden for nothing to his fellow creatures, and has nothing either to fear or hope for from them. Unlike the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, which ask no covering but the sky, and desire no food but that which nature spreads before them in abundance, man has a thousand wants which he cannot supply without the assistance of his fellow man. If instances have occurred of some, who, from mistaken piety, or gloomy misanthropy, have forsaken the haunts of men, and buried themselves in solitude, content with the rude habitation which their own hands have reared, and with the frugal fare which nature unassisted yields; these instances only serve to shew how widely such a mode of

* See Smith's Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations.—Book I. Chap. i.

life is opposed to the natural habits and character of men. For we are bound together in social union by our inclinations, not less than by our wants. Our choicest pleasures are of a social cast; and all that gives to life its charm and value, arises solely from our mutual intercourse. Our joys and our sorrows alike contribute to attach us to society; for by participation with others our joys are enhanced and our sorrows alleviated. How terrible would be the approach of sickness, were no kind friend at hand to smooth our pillow! And how worthless the greatest abundance of the means of enjoyment, without an associate to share our pleasure! To the ear of man what music is sweeter than the voice of man? And what more pleasing solace do we find to beguile the path of life, than the interchange of thought with kindred minds? But be it observed, these praises of society all suppose among mankind a mutual kindness, and a constant reciprocation of friendly services; without which, these choicest blessings of human life would be altogether precluded, and joyless, if not dangerous, would be the intercourse of men. Next, then, to that great command of Nature which bids us labour for subsistence, her plainest injunc-

tion to every son of man is to do unto others whatever he would that others should do unto him; since this is the plainest means of happiness to beings so closely connected, and so mutually dependant upon one another. None can expect kind offices from others, who is not ready on all occasions to impart the like to them; and should any one confine his regards and services entirely to himself, he would act not less to his own detriment, than to the detriment of society.

But though it is plainly the duty of every one, to consult in some measure the happiness of others, it cannot be expected, nor does duty require, that we should utterly renounce all pursuits and affections of a selfish nature, and apply ourselves in the first instance to schemes of general benevolence. While united to society at large by the obvious necessities of our condition, we find ourselves more closely connected with some by ties of natural affection; and it is equally the impulse of nature, and the dictate of reason, that these our immediate connexions should be the objects of our first attention and our chief services. The doctrine has, indeed, been advanced, that the ties of

kindred ought not at all to influence us in the distribution of our good offices and benevolent regards;—that our affections should be equally extended to all mankind, varying only according to the degrees of merit; and that to shew partiality to any individual merely because he is related to ourselves, is contrary to reason and justice.* Respecting this strange doctrine, it may be briefly observed, that, in the first place, it is not possible thus to divest ourselves of those private affections which nature has so deeply implanted in the human breast; and next, that, if it were possible, it would not be desirable, since, by following their impulse to a certain extent, a far greater amount of good is produced, than what could arise from resisting it. The power of an individual is in general so limited, that the influence of his good offices must necessarily be confined within a very narrow circle; and if he impart them not to those whom he has the fullest means of benefiting, they will either not be imparted at all, or be rendered entirely fruitless. The only effect, then, of attempting thus to equalize our benevolent regards and services, would be either to deprive us of the wish to do good,

* See Godwin's Enquiry concerning Political Justice.—Book II. Chap. ii.

where it is most in our power, or to inspire us with fruitless feelings of sympathy for thousands whom there is no possibility of serving. It is a common maxim, sometimes indeed ridiculed, because sometimes misapplied, but nevertheless just when rightly understood, that "charity begins at home." Unquestionably we ought never to think of extending our good offices to remoter objects, till we have fulfilled the duties which we owe to those who are immediately dependent on us. Then, and not till then, we may extend our beneficence, and devote what remains of our time and means to whatever additional schemes of usefulness our opportunities may present.* Whoever, then, is a parent, his first regards, his first services are most undoubtedly due to his own family, and in seeking, not merely to supply their necessities, but to procure for them whatever blessings a parent's heart may reasonably wish, in sparing no expense or trouble to secure them the inestimable benefit of a good education, and in making every suitable provision for settling them in life with the greatest advantage, he at once fulfils a most imperative duty, and renders himself most truly useful to

* Cicero de Officiis.—Lib. I. Cap. xvi. xvii.

society at large. Whoever, also, has a relative, whom age, or infirmities, or misfortunes render helpless and dependent, in what other way can his benevolent exertions be so properly directed, as in ministering to the wants, alleviating the sorrows, watching over the comfort, of the object thus recommended to his care? But supposing we could find an individual altogether disengaged from ties like these, without family, without dependents, without relatives claiming his good offices, and at the same time under no necessity of providing for his own support; yet let not such individual imagine, that he is justified either in remaining inactive, or in devoting his time to any employment that may please his fancy. Let him remember, that, however unconnected he may appear, he is yet a member of society; that he derives from his connexion with society numberless advantages, and that he is bound, therefore, by every good feeling, to make himself in some way useful. Here, indeed, we cannot establish the obligations of virtue on the grounds of selfishness; for we cannot allege that he who chooses to think only of his own gratification, will necessarily incur thereby any positive harm. And whoever feels no dissatisfaction at the thought of being entirely useless in the world;

whoever can witness the sufferings of others, without acknowledging their powerful *claim* for succour, him we can hardly hope to influence by any appeal of this nature. But the man whose heart is rightly disposed, regards all that bear the human form as brethren, and nothing that relates to humanity is foreign to his breast.* Wherever he witnesses misery, he pities, and strives to relieve it. Wherever he sees injustice or oppression exercised, he condemns, and, if possible, he restrains it. Wherever vice, superstition, or ignorance meets his view, he sighs to correct the evil. He watches with lively interest the progress of the human race in knowledge, virtue, and happiness; and however little his own humble talents or limited means can avail, yet the little that he can, he feels it his duty to contribute to the welfare and improvement of mankind. To one thus disposed it is far from appearing a matter of indifference what employment he chooses, provided it be harmless; for even the pursuit of knowledge, if it be made subservient only to selfish gratification, is by no means sufficient to satisfy these higher claims of duty.† And though unquestionably such an employ-

* Homo sum, et nil humanum a me alienum puto.—TERENCE.

† See Note Y.

ment is infinitely superior in utility and dignity to those pursuits of vicious pleasure, in which too many persons of wealth and leisure squander away their precious time, yet there is a higher duty, which nothing should supersede, requiring every member of society to make himself in some way useful. And on those whose own wants demand not their attention, it is peculiarly incumbent to consider the numberless objects which invite their benevolent exertions; how many wretched whom they may relieve; how many ignorant whom they may instruct; how many vicious whom they may reform; how many schemes of usefulness which call for their support; and in the diligent pursuit of such employments, they will find a satisfaction far superior to any gratifications of a selfish nature.—But the proper mode of exercising this extended beneficence demands a more enlarged discussion; for the wish to do good, if not judiciously directed in the choice of means, will be in danger of counteracting its own end.

The mere act of giving, whenever an object of distress presents itself to our notice, besides being the easiest and most indolent of all

modes of beneficence, is generally one of very questionable utility, as it may tend to encourage the poor in habits of improvidence, and increase the number of those useless drones of society, who indolently rely upon the compassion of the public for that subsistence, which they are able, but not willing, to procure by their own exertions. The objects of just commiseration and true charity rarely obtrude themselves on public notice, but are withdrawn from view in the dark retreats of poverty: and if we would practise a wise beneficence, we must seek out these in their obscure concealment, and take pains to discover that honest distress which is the genuine offspring of misfortune. And even to such deserving objects we should not lavish our bounties with blind generosity, but inquire minutely into the circumstances of their case, and consider deliberately in what mode we may bestow our aid with most effectual and permanent benefit. We cannot always calculate upon the prudent use of our gifts even by those who are upon the whole deserving objects of charity; and the same donation bestowed in the shape of such necessaries, or such assistance, as we ourselves perceive to be needed, will often prove

more truly serviceable, than when given as money to be spent at the discretion of the poor themselves. By small means thus judiciously and opportunely applied, we may do incalculably more good, than by the largest munificence indiscreetly exercised. To those whose means are limited, a very effectual mode of doing good is afforded by public charitable institutions. "Public charities," it has been well remarked, "admit of this argument in their favour, that your money goes farther towards attaining the end for which it is given, than it can do by any private and separate beneficence. A guinea, for example, contributed to an infirmary, becomes the means of providing one patient at least with a physician, surgeon, apothecary, with medicine, diet, lodging, and suitable attendance; which is not the tenth part of what the same assistance, if it could be procured at all, would cost to a sick person or family in any other situation."* Yet even with respect to these institutions, caution and discretion are not less necessary than in the exercise of private beneficence; for some there are, the utility of which has of late, and not

* Paley's Moral Philosophy.—Book III. Part II. Ch. v.

without good reason, been called in question.* Let it not, however, be supposed that pecuniary bounty is the sole, or even the chief mode of exercising beneficence. Money is doubtless a very efficient, and often an indispensable instrument of usefulness; but good may be done in a thousand ways without its aid. Counsel, sympathy, or kind attentions, will often afford more true relief, and excite a warmer gratitude, than the most liberal gifts; and many distresses are of such a nature that they admit of no other alleviation. Sometimes a small exertion of personal labour, a small sacrifice of personal convenience, will confer a benefit which no money could possibly bestow. To those who follow professional employments, opportunities must perpetually occur of rendering important services in the way of their profession with little sacrifice or trouble on their own part; and as for those who occupy stations of power, or are privileged to act a leading part in public affairs, what limits can we assign to their capability of usefulness, when they apply their talents to the work of legislation, or raise their voice in the sacred cause of justice or humanity ?—But of all the means of doing good, the

* See Note Z.

highest in importance and the most unequivocal in their tendency, are those which are employed in the promotion of virtue: and this, be it observed, is an object towards which every one may contribute; for even when all other means are wanting, that at least remains, which consists in the influence of a good example; and however insignificant may be our condition, however contracted our sphere of influence, we may rest assured that our good example will not be without its efficacy in recommending to others the course of virtue. It is, at least, a necessary preparative for usefulness of this description; for what will avail all other efforts to promote the moral welfare of mankind, if our own example counteract our precepts, and bring into suspicion the sincerity of our exhortations? While, however, we are duly careful to be not wanting in this essential requisite, we should assiduously apply to the same great object whatever means we may possess of a more direct nature. It is impossible to detail the thousand various opportunities of which we may avail ourselves, for imparting to others the knowledge of their duty, or for urging them to the practice of it. Care, indeed, should be taken, that we do not give offence, by appearing arrogantly to erect our-

selves into censors of the conduct of others, or by obtruding our advice or exhortations, where we have no claim to be listened to. But by a proper attention to times, persons, and circumstances, and by the aid, moreover, of a conciliating demeanour, much may be done by every one towards correcting the errors, or making good impressions upon the minds of others; more especially by the powerful and wealthy among their inferiors or dependants, by the enlightened among the ignorant, or by the aged among the young.* And here again it occurs to be observed, that the combination of numbers in public institutions is far more effectual as a means of usefulness, than any individual exertions. And among the various institutions which aim in different ways to promote the highest interests of mankind, those which have for their object the *education of the poor*, decidedly claim the preference. The important advantages of an informed and cultivated mind have already been shewn in a former section; and whoever is sensible of the value of these advantages, and actuated by a spirit of true benevolence, must surely be desirous, not only of enjoying them himself, but of extend-

* See Note A a.

ing them as widely as possible among his brethren of mankind. And considering, moreover, the obvious difficulty of altering the inveterate habits and prejudices of those who are advanced in years, and the manifest advantage of commencing the work of instruction at a time of life when the mind is peculiarly pliant, no means of doing good appear so truly eligible as those which impart the blessings of education to minds which would otherwise remain neglected, or be nurtured only in the ways of vice. Apprehensions have, indeed, been entertained by some, that the education of the poor may tend to render them discontented, as it is supposed that, when qualified for superior employments, they will feel averse to those manual labours which are appropriate to their station. To this objection thus much must perhaps be conceded, that there is a limit beyond which it is not desirable to extend the education of the lower classes. For we cannot alter that law of our condition which imposes the necessity of manual labour on a large proportion of the members of society; and as common sense itself dictates, that the mode and extent of education should vary according to the prospects and destination of different individuals, we could not

reasonably think of bestowing on those who are under this necessity, the same education which is proper for those who may aspire to more intellectual employments. This, however, is an extreme against which precautions are needless, as it is almost necessarily precluded by the very circumstances of the case. An education conferred by public charity cannot well be so prolonged or complete as that which is common among the higher classes; for to attempt to protract it beyond that period when the young become fit for profitable labour, would be to subject the public, or the poor themselves, or both, to a burden much too heavy to be borne. The short period to which the education of the poor is therefore necessarily limited, is insufficient for their making any attainments beyond what are serviceable, and proper for their condition. We need not fear to communicate to the labouring classes any kind or degree of knowledge which their circumstances admit; for knowledge, *when generally diffused among them*, will furnish no ground for unreasonable expectations, because it will be only an ordinary qualification common to all of the same class. And if the rich are alarmed at the prospect of being equalled

in mental cultivation by those whom they regard as their inferiors, let them remember, that their greater leisure and better opportunities of improvement will always enable them to preserve, if they choose, their present superiority. The more the minds of the poor are enlightened, the more clearly they must perceive that their true interest consists in diligently pursuing those employments which the necessities of their condition impose upon them: and if any feeling of discontent arises from their minds being cultivated and their tastes improved, it will only operate as a motive to steadier diligence and stricter economy, in order to procure opportunities of enjoying those pleasures of intellect for which they sigh. Drudgery, in fact, must be more or less submitted to by all classes; and the poor, if they exercised a proper prudence, would have no reason to complain that their condition is peculiarly hard in this respect. All classes must undergo much irksome labour, and all classes enjoy occasional intervals of leisure; and surely it is a matter fervently to be wished by every friend of human kind, that the poor should devote their hours of leisure to the useful and dignified pursuits of knowledge, rather than to

those low and pernicious gratifications to which they are now so much addicted.* Another objection to the education of the poor has been advanced on this ground, that in giving them the ability and taste for literary pursuits, we expose them to the danger of being corrupted and misled by pernicious books. But this objection, if at all valid, would extend much further than the case to which it is actually applied, and would discourage the pursuit of knowledge generally by persons of any class. The short and obvious reply to it is this, that education in all cases may be, and ought to be so conducted as to obviate the danger of its subsequent misuse. The same lessons which have for their object to teach the children of the poor to read, may serve also to impress upon their minds the truths of religion and the maxims of virtue: and good impressions thus imparted in this susceptible period of life will in all probability continue to influence through every future period. Nor should it be forgotten, that the advantages of education, though it should be allowed that they may bring some dangers and temptations which would not otherwise have existed, remove

* See Note B b.

others of a far more formidable nature; for they supply an inexhaustible source of innocent amusement, which will preclude the entrance of many an evil thought, and prevent the wish for many an illicit pleasure.

Having now reviewed the several objects of active employment, together with the reasons which recommend them to our attention, all that remains in this branch of our subject, is to point out certain qualities or habits which are conducive to success in all our active pursuits considered generally.

SECTION III.

QUALITIES OR HABITS CONDUCIVE TO THE SUCCESSFUL DISCHARGE OF ACTIVE DUTY IN GENERAL.

I. In the first place, *to make a proper choice, and a proper arrangement of our employments*, is evidently a necessary means of duly fulfilling our active duties. To be employed is by no means sufficient, unless we are employed in such a way as our station or circumstances demand. There are some who neglect the proper business of their station, not from sloth-

fulness or the love of ease, but from a fondness for other pursuits, which, though laudable in their proper place, they unwisely suffer to engross too large a share of their attention. There are others, who, having no necessary business to engage their attention, instead of choosing those more dignified and useful employments, which tend to the good of others, or their own mental or moral improvement, devote themselves to the most trifling pursuits, in which they become as actively occupied and as deeply interested, as in business of the greatest moment. There is a third class, of a character not so harmless, who neglect their own concerns for the purpose of intermeddling in those of other people; who are perpetually active in spreading the tale of scandal, making remarks upon the conduct of their neighbours, and working mischief in their little circle by the license of their tongues; and who, though called *busy-bodies*, are certainly not busy in the way they should be. It is manifestly the imperative duty of every person to consider what is the proper business of his station, and to devote to that in the first place the time and attention which it requires. We should not be satisfied with merely being employed, but con-

sider whether we are employed in the right way; whether we are doing that which our present circumstances most require, and which could not be exchanged for any more suitable or important business. As there are few or none, moreover, whose time is wholly occupied by that one most necessary employment on which their subsistence depends, and whose attention is not claimed by several objects, we should set before our view all the duties which belong to our condition, and after considering them in their relative importance, arrange our time accordingly. Allowing sufficient time for the due discharge of our indispensable duties, together with what is needful for rest or recreation, we should consider what other pursuits demand our attention in the next degree, and allot to each that share of our leisure which its nature or importance may appear to deserve. By thus marking out a plan of employment, and arranging our time according to the claims of our several duties, we shall evidently be better enabled to perform all that is incumbent on us, and escape the danger of any material omission. Without this regular arrangement of our time, the temptations to indolence are multiplied, and even our utmost activity is ren-

dered almost as unavailing as absolute sloth. For want of some rule by which we may know to what particular part of our duty each particular period of our time should be devoted, the period will often insensibly elapse before our choice is determined: or at the best, our business will be followed in so desultory and irregular a way, as to become involved in a confusion which will greatly impede its progress. Such parts of our business as are least agreeable, will be deferred, and consequently will be either entirely neglected, or very imperfectly performed. One occupation will interfere with another. Business will encroach upon the season of relaxation: relaxation will be found necessary at the period which should be devoted to business. Thus we shall be continually harassed and impeded with the pressure of deferred employments, and though continually busy in appearance, we shall yet find that we accomplish little.

II. Another quality of great use in the discharge of active duty, is *Perseverance,* to which is opposed Fickleness or Unsteadiness. There are persons who, though always actively and even ardently occupied, yet never succeed well

in what they undertake, because they cannot adhere steadily to one pursuit, but are ever transferring their attention from one thing to another. When first they enter upon any new pursuit, they are exceedingly ardent, and follow it for a time with extraordinary diligence; but no sooner do they begin to meet with obstacles and difficulties, than their ardour cools, their diligence relaxes, and the object of their transitory zeal is abandoned for some new pursuit, which in like manner engages for a while all their powers, but is soon in its turn relinquished. From persons of such character, no great success in any undertaking, no distinguished attainments in any art or science can ever be expected. For in what pursuit of any moment can we engage, in which obstacles and difficulties will not occur, and how, but by perseverance, can these be surmounted? The man of perseverance, having once proposed to himself an object of pursuit, allows no difficulties, that are at all surmountable, to deter him from his course; and nothing short of absolute impossibilities will cause him to desist from his exertions, till he has attained his object. Nor does he readily believe that the obstacles which present themselves *are* impossibilities. In cases

where others of less energetic character would resign their purpose in despair, he will still persist. Difficulties, as they multiply upon him, will only add fresh vigour to his resolution, and fresh energy to his exertions; and seldom will he fail eventually to obtain the full accomplishment of his desires. It is wonderful, indeed, to observe how much a character of this description is capable of achieving. Obstacles which to others seemed insurmountable, before him appear to vanish; and beholders, astonished at his great success, and at results which appeared to them so hopeless of attainment, are prone to ascribe to some extraordinary good fortune, what is only in reality the natural effect of persevering exertion.

III. A third quality often called for in the active business of life, is the spirit of *Enterprise*, or that confidence which is not deterred from *commencing* an undertaking by the dangers or difficulties attending it. Nothing tends so much to discourage activity, and damp the ardour of exertion, as that timid spirit, which is perpetually creating imaginary or magnifying real difficulties. It is a striking, though singular, illustration of this disposition, which is

found in a sentence of the book of Proverbs.— "The slothful man saith, 'there is a lion without; I shall be slain in the streets.'"* He conjures up a thousand visionary obstacles in the way of duty, and is discouraged from entering upon important undertakings by the groundless fears of his distempered fancy. If we desire to be eminently useful either to ourselves or others, we must beware of yielding to this timid spirit, and resolutely shake off that soothing indolence, which would cause us to shrink from arduous exertion by persuading us that exertion will be of no avail. By boldly encountering difficulties and dangers, we shall generally find that they will vanish before us as we advance. The lion which we beheld in the way, will be found, on a nearer approach, to be only a shadowy form conjured up by Indolence to render us more passive captives to her soft inthralments. There is, indeed, another extreme which is equally to be avoided; I mean that blind and heedless Rashness or Presumption, which takes no account whatever of even the most probable difficulties or most formidable dangers, but rushes on at random to the object in view, without forethought, caution, or pre-

* Proverbs, Ch. xxii. v. 13.

paration of any kind. A person of this character, though he may sometimes, by the favour of fortune, be successful, will far more frequently be betrayed by his rashness into fatal and irretrievable errors. In a just medium between the timidity which overrates difficulties, and the rashness which overlooks them, lies that spirit of judicious enterprise, which, while it foresees dangers and difficulties in their full magnitude, has at once boldness to encounter, and prudence to guard against them. This quality, combined with Perseverance, forms the truly useful and efficient character, and when aided by distinguished talents and directed to important ends, may be, as it often has been, the means of conferring on mankind the most signal services.*

IV. A fourth quality of great use in the prosecution of our active duties, is *Despatch*, or the habit of resolving and acting with promptitude. Some persons are subject to such indecision of mind, that they often lose in deliberation the time that should be employed in action. They are frequently kept in a state of

* A fine example of both these qualities is afforded in the character of Columbus. See Robertson's History of America. Book II.

painful suspense, hesitating between two courses of conduct which seem equally eligible, and to which their choice alternately inclines, without finally fixing upon either, till at last the opportunity for action is lost, or the alternative no longer remains. But the man of promptitude determines at once. He lets no interval elapse between the intermission of one employment and the commencement of another, and his resolutions are always followed up by immediate action. In every emergence, he perceives, with short deliberation, the course to be pursued, and enters upon it with an energy which admits of no delay. The advantage thus gained in the saving and improvement of time, is beyond calculation. Those little intervals of time which the man of dilatory habits consumes in deliberation or inaction, amount in the aggregate to a startling sum: and though the behaviour of these two characters may not, at first view, strike us as widely dissimilar, yet if we examine the results of their respective labour after the lapse of any considerable period, we shall find a manifest and most surprising difference.

V. To these active qualities we may, lastly,

add the power of *fixing the attention* to the employment in which we are engaged. Some persons are subject to a certain roving and desultory turn of mind, which deprives them of all command over the current of their thoughts. They suffer their attention to be led astray by every idle fancy that presents itself. A thousand vague imaginations fill their minds, and divert their faculties from that which ought to employ them. A mind of this description must evidently unfit us for engaging with effect in the active business of life. Unless we resolutely compel our minds to abandon all unprofitable trains of thought, and concentrate all our faculties on the task before us, we shall assuredly attain but little success in any of our undertakings, and very imperfectly discharge the duties of our station.

CHAP. II.

GENERAL DUTIES OF RESTRAINT.

Were human nature free from any propensity to what is evil, the foregoing precepts which point out what duty requires to be *done*, might be sufficient for our guidance. But this is evidently not the case. We are subject, by nature, to several passions and propensities, which powerfully actuate us independently of all considerations of duty. Desires and aversions, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, attachments and dislikes, continually, in turn, possess our breasts, furnishing continual incitements to action, and abundant sources of happiness or woe. These feelings, moreover, are liable to various excesses and irregularities, which call for the restraining and correcting hand of reason. They are often excited by unworthy objects; they sometimes arise from good or evil which has no existence but in our own imaginations; or if their objects be real and legitimate, they sometimes exceed, they some-

times fall short of that degree which reason approves. It is in pointing out these excesses and irregularities of our natural passions, and in teaching their due government, that the precepts of morality are chiefly employed; and as the precepts to be given for this purpose consist rather in prohibitions than commands, pointing out what is to be *avoided* or *forborne* more than what is to be *done*, the duties now to be considered may, for that reason, be distinguished from the foregoing by the name of Negative Duties, or Duties of Restraint. For the complete investigation of this class of duties, it is necessary to consider each affection and passion of our nature separately, in order to show the excesses to which it is liable, and the errors to which it may lead. Before, however, we proceed to the particular regulation of each active principle, our attention is required to certain general rules of restraint, which are applicable to all of them collectively, and which may be ranged under the four heads of Prudence, Justice, Veracity, and Moderation.

SECTION I.

OF PRUDENCE.

The virtue of Prudence consists in putting that restraint upon our desires and passions which is required by a regard to our own welfare. Considered in its most extensive sense, it comprehends almost the whole of duty; for duty, in almost all its branches, may be recommended on the ground of enlightened self-interest. But the term Prudence, according to its common acceptation, denotes that inferior kind of virtue which arises from a regard to worldly interest; and even with respect to this, it has more of a negative than a positive import; that is, it relates more to the avoiding of evil, than to the active pursuit of good. The great object of Prudence is *security;* and it leads us carefully to avoid whatever conduct may injure our health, endanger our property, or blemish our reputation. It assumes several names, according to the different objects to which it may relate. When it moderates the pursuit of sensual pleasure, it is called Temperance or Chastity: when it restrains from ruinous expense, it is called Economy or Frugality:

when it is employed in guarding against the arts of designing men, or in directing us in the choice of our associates, it is termed Discretion or Circumspection. This principle of restraint, though it has regard entirely to self, serves yet, in some measure, to direct us to a proper behaviour towards others; since by following the impulse of our own desires without regard to the rights or comfort of others, we invariably bring evil upon ourselves through the resentment which we excite. Prudence, therefore, will withhold us from acts of dishonesty or injustice, on account of the manifest danger which attends such practices. It will lead us also to observe an inoffensive and pacific behaviour, in order to escape the vexations which spring from dissention. It may even suggest the expedience of some exertions for the good of others, in order that others may be the more disposed to render us good offices in return. But Prudence, however enlightened and well-directed, constitutes only an inferior degree of moral excellence, and is incapable of leading to any conduct which will inspire the highest sentiments of approbation. It cannot prompt to deeds of generous sacrifice, heroic enterprise, warm-hearted kindness, or disinterested public

spirit. And even the good conduct which it does produce, excites no high degree of approbation, because the principle itself is selfish, and argues, wherever it operates solely and exclusively, a want of those kind affections, of that warmth of feeling, and that elevated regard to duty, which constitute the strongest title to esteem. Though the quality of Prudence, therefore, is certainly entitled to the name of a virtue, yet the man who is *merely prudent* neither engages nor deserves our highest admiration. It is a principle which ought to operate in those cases only where our own interests are exclusively concerned. Whenever the interests of others are involved, our hearts should be open to the influence of more generous and disinterested principles.

The term Prudence is sometimes used in a more extended sense, to denote wise or judicious conduct, directed to greater and nobler objects than the care of the health, fortune, and reputation of the individual. In this case it has respect to means, rather than ends or motives; implying that judicious choice of measures, that wise arrangement of plans, which is best calculated to secure the end in view, whatever that

end may be. The term thus used is exactly synonymous with Wisdom, which indeed is the more proper term to employ in the extended sense here stated. It hardly needs to be remarked, that Prudence, considered in the sense of Wisdom, is compatible with the best feelings of the heart, and that their union constitutes the highest perfection of the human character. But in order that we may fully understand the exact nature and province of the duty of Prudence, we must take a more enlarged survey of its several objects.

I. Prudence, in the first place, consists in paying a due regard to the preservation of Health. Upon the importance of this most valuable of earthly blessings it is altogether needless to enlarge. Health is evidently that which gives to all other comforts their power of pleasing, and without which, we are alike burdensome to ourselves and useless to others,—incapable of enjoyment and unfit for active duty. It is, therefore, a treasure, of which every dictate of Prudence strongly urges us to be careful; and whatever restraint, whatever denial, whatever painful rules of exercise or regimen are necessary for this purpose, our duty

and our interest alike admonish us to submit to them without a murmur, for the sake of so invaluable an object. Occasions, however, may arise when the care of health should give way to duties of higher obligation. Should circumstances impose upon us some important, but dangerous office of usefulness; should our services be required at the bed of sickness, where infection threatens; or instant help be needed by one in imminent peril, whom we have it in our power, though not without personal risk, to succour; in these and similar situations, there is a duty paramount to all prudential considerations; and the truly wise and good man, who unites prudence with higher principles, though he will not, on the one hand, expose himself rashly and needlessly to danger, will never, on the other hand, shrink from it, when it unavoidably meets him in any important task of usefulness.

II. Another branch of Prudence consists in the care of Property. The evils of poverty are so truly formidable, that to be regardless of them would be absolute infatuation. They may, indeed, be feared too much, and the care of property, as in the case of the miser, may swal-

low up every other care, and supersede every higher duty. But while we allow that such excessive parsimony is highly culpable, we must admit that some degree of this care is necessary, not only for the sake of comfort, but for the security of our virtue. Extravagance, it has been often observed, if not itself vicious, yet, generally leads to vice; for perfect integrity of character can hardly be maintained amidst those strong temptations to meanness and falsehood which arise from a state of embarrassment and debt. The man of prudence will, therefore, justly deem it important to guard against such dangers, not only by abstaining from all needless indulgences, and duly proportioning his expenses to his means, but by refusing to stake his property in rash and dangerous schemes; by being content with small and certain profits, rather than run great risks for the chance of great emoluments; and by keeping, if possible, so far within the limits of his income, as to be provided with a resource in case of sickness, or misfortune.

III. The next object which engages the care of Prudence, is Reputation. Whether our own enjoyment, or our power of usefulness to others,

be the object considered, a good name is in either view of great importance. What man of rightly constituted mind can be indifferent about the opinions of his fellow men respecting him, or regard it in any other light than as a formidable evil to incur their censure or suspicions? Duty may sometimes require us to encounter this evil; and the testimony of conscience will in that case enable us to endure it; but it is surely an evil which every wise man will carefully avoid, whenever it may be avoided without the sacrifice of principle. For a good name is highly to be prized, not only on account of its importance to our happiness, but still more as being necessary to give weight to our good counsels, and influence to our virtuous example. It evidently, then, behoves us to be peculiarly circumspect in all that concerns our reputation. And for this purpose it is not sufficient to avoid all real departures from the path of honour and virtue, but we must shun, as much as possible, the very appearance of evil. It is an ill-natured and censorious world we live in, and even the best intentioned conduct is liable to be misrepresented and traduced. Though, therefore, we may feel conscious of the uprightness of our conduct, and the purity of our

intentions, it is still necessary to consider appearances, to guard against misrepresentation, and to beware lest our good be evil spoken of. A prudential regard to reputation, though it ought by no means to be the first principle of our conduct, is yet highly useful as an additional dissuasive from vice; and important as this object is to all, to those who are just entering upon the stage of life, it is peculiarly deserving of attention. The young should be admonished that nothing is so essential to their success in life as a good reputation, and that when once their character is lost, there is an end to all their hopes of advancement. If higher motives do not avail, let this consideration at least deter them from those irregular practices by which their good name may be for ever injured. Let them be assured that one false step committed in early life will entail disgrace and mortification upon them through all their following years: for evil deeds are long remembered; years of penitence and good conduct will hardly efface them from the recollection of the world, and malice, when provoked, will never fail to rake them up afresh, to cast new stigma on their hapless authors. The same consideration supplies a motive to all, but to the young more

especially, to be particularly cautious in the choice of their associates. Though by some unusual good fortune, or some uncommon strength of mind, we should be able to preserve our innocence amidst the seductions of bad company, we cannot save our reputation from its blasting influence. The world, we may be assured, will judge of us by our associates, and however clear we may keep ourselves of their evil practices, the world nevertheless will charge us with the same, and involve us all in one sweeping condemnation.

IV. A fourth particular office of Prudence, nearly allied to the foregoing, consists in avoiding, as much as possible, whatever may give offence or involve us in dissention. It must not of course be understood by this, that we ought never to do any thing which may draw after it these consequences. The voice of duty often calls us to the painful task of encountering the animosity of men; and he who sets out in the world with a determination to do his duty to the utmost, must by no means expect to gain universal approbation. They whom all the world applauds are not in all instances the most deserving of applause, but will generally

be found to owe their popularity merely to their complaisant dispositions and accommodating principles; while men of strictest integrity and most extensive usefulness are often by their very virtues exposed to opposition, enmity, and reproach. But while we are mindful of the necessity of sometimes encountering censure in the cause of duty, we must not forget that there is still a subordinate obligation of prudence, which requires us not wantonly or needlessly to involve ourselves in dissention. To be an object of hatred and to be exposed to those injuries and slights which hatred dictates, is surely an evil justly to be dreaded; and though he would not act rightly who should neglect a higher duty in order to escape it, yet certainly he is not prudent, who does not avoid it, wherever he can do so innocently. The application of this part of prudence is obviously as extensive as the means which we have of doing injury; and all acts of injustice, are acts of imprudence also, on account of the animosity which they cannot fail to excite against their authors. But as the more glaring violations of justice will be more appropriately treated of under the head of that duty, which is of paramount obligation to prudence, we shall confine the

illustration of this branch of prudence to those cases to which the obligations of justice do not so obviously apply; and some observations on the government of the tongue may not improperly here find a place. There is not, perhaps, in human life a more abundant source of strife and ill-will, than an unbridled tongue; and it is mischievous alike to him who owns it, and to all who have the misfortune to be within its reach. A contemptuous remark, a sneer, a jest, inflicts often a deeper wound, and is less easily forgiven, than the most material injury; and he who is in the habit of indulging in language of this description, will dearly pay for his thoughtless freedom, by bringing upon himself a host of enemies. It is not always a sufficient plea for this conduct, that truth has not been violated; for though it cannot be right to *belie* our real sentiments, to *refrain from expressing them*, is often one of the plainest dictates of prudence, if not of justice; and what man in his right senses would ever think of carrying to its fullest extent the principle of openly declaring on all occasions his judgment of the characters of all he meets with. Similar observations may be made respecting the declaration of obnoxious opinions. Occasions undoubtedly

may arise which will imperatively call for such declaration, and the man of firmness and integrity will not shrink from the painful task, when it cannot be avoided consistently with honour, or with the advancement of the public good. But where no necessity exists on the ground of sincerity, and no good end is likely to be answered by it, there is surely no obligation to expose oneself to enmity by an unreserved avowal of unpopular opinions. On the contrary it is an obvious duty of prudence to maintain in mixed society a certain degree of reserve with respect to our sentiments, and none but a fool will lay open his mind to every casual companion, or every impertinent querist.*

V. In the last place, prudence consists in taking proper precautions against the arts of designing men. The observation and advice of Jesus to his disciples may be applied, with some allowance, to all who are entering upon the stage of human life. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." In the mixed assemblage of human society,

* See, on this subject, some very judicious remarks by the late Dr. Aikin, in his Letters to his Son. Vol. 2, Letter XIV.

where crafty and designing men are never wanting, to take advantage of inexperience, to impose upon credulity, or lead astray unsuspecting innocence, the harmlessness of the dove will not avail for our security, unless accompanied and guarded by the wisdom of the serpent. For however good our principles and motives may be, if we be ignorant of the character and motives of those around us, if we be not aware of the arts which may be practised by unprincipled men to impose upon or mislead us, not only our property, but our virtue itself will be in danger, and our ignorance and simplicity may be the means of betraying us into the most fatal errors. These, indeed, are painful truths to a mind which feels averse to suspicion; yet they are truths which must be borne in mind and acted upon, if we would preserve the path of virtue and discretion. To the young these prudential considerations are peculiarly important. Their want of experience and knowledge of the world renders them more peculiarly liable to danger from this quarter. All openness, truth, and sincerity themselves, they fondly imagine that all men are the same, and go forth into the world with unsuspecting confidence, little dreaming of the hidden snares so thickly spread around them. We would by

no means substitute instead of this a jealous, close, and suspicious temper, which is far from being either amiable or useful. Yet in a world like this, some degree of caution and reserve in our intercourse with men is absolutely necessary. It is the part of charity to hope the best of every one. But at the same time it would be the extreme of folly to repose confidence in those of whose character we are entirely ignorant. Courtesy and good will are due to all our brethren; but before we impart our intimacy, before we seek counsel in our affairs, or open our hearts in confidential intercourse, we ought to be well assured that he with whom we thus communicate is worthy of our confidence.

SECTION II.

OF JUSTICE.

It is the tendency of many of our desires and passions to lead us into conduct injurious to others. Thus the desire of wealth presents temptations to fraud or violence. The desire of power is sometimes gratified by trampling upon the liberties, or sacrificing the lives of multitudes. The desire of fame, by inspiring envy,

leads not unfrequently to calumny and detraction; and the thirst of vengeance too often exceeds all reasonable measure of punishment, and repays injury by greater injury. The exercise of that restraint which is necessary to resist this tendency, constitutes the virtue of justice, a virtue so manifestly essential to the well being, and even to the existence of society, that in every community of men, however rude and ignorant, it is practised by tacit consent, or enforced by some institution, more or less complete, of laws and government. Without some mutual regard to the property and personal safety of one another, it is obvious men could not at all associate together, but would shun each other with mutual fear, or meet only to contend and destroy. The only security being found in solitude, each would dwell apart in a state of savage independence, relying upon his own resources, and guarded by his own individual might, like the wild beast in his den, the foe of all, by all regarded as a foe.

The duties of Justice are distinguished from all other duties by the peculiar strictness of their obligation, and the peculiar precision with which they may be determined. Other duties

are, for the most part, recommended by considerations of *expedience*, which relate chiefly to the welfare of the individual, and amount only to that weaker motive which we term an *inducement;* but these are enforced by a kind of *moral necessity*, which we express by saying we are *bound* or *obliged* to perform them, and that others have a *right* to expect the performance; and to violate the rights of others is justly deemed more culpable, because more adverse to the good order of society, than any conduct by which the agent only is a sufferer. The rules of Justice are also more determinate, and may be laid down with greater precision, than any other precepts of human duty; for other duties consist for the most part in regulating *feelings* and *affections*, the proper state of which it is impossible to define by any accurate limits; while Justice prescribes or prohibits certain *actions* which may be exactly specified and described. How, for instance, can we state the precise point where innocent enjoyment ends and intemperance begins? How can we mark the exact boundary which separates firmness from obstinacy, gentleness from weakness, cool courage from blind rashness, or wise caution from pusillanimous timidity? In all these cases the inquiry re-

lates to qualities which vary by such nice gradations, and blend so imperceptibly with one another, that it is impossible to draw a precise line, and to say on this side is virtue, on that vice. But the rules of Justice are not thus vague and indeterminate. The distinctions of property, to which they chiefly relate, are in general as obvious as the distinctions of person, and the actions by which rights are violated, may be enumerated and defined with almost mathematical precision. Cases of difficulty may, indeed, occur, in which considerable reflection will be required to determine the rule of right, and where room may after all remain for doubt and diversity of opinion. These nice points of justice afford an interesting and important subject of inquiry, and are the leading topics of discussion in many works on moral science. But they belong rather to the science of Casuistry or Natural Law, than to that of Morality, and would be unsuitable to the design of the present treatise. Such discussions, in fact, are not of much practical use, as the cases to which they relate are comparatively of rare occurrence, and seldom present themselves to our attention, except in courts of law, or books of jurisprudence. The great leading rules of justice are sufficiently

obvious to all, and are prescribed and enforced in every community by the laws of state. It is not, however, to be imagined, that by the mere observance of the laws of state we fulfil all the obligations of justice. The best system of legislation is defective, and leaves room for many acts of oppression and arts of knavery, against which no prohibition exists and no punishment is provided; not to mention that cases sometimes occur in which law and justice are altogether at variance.* The man who is actuated by the *spirit* of Justice, far from owning no other restraint than that which the law of the land imposes, pays equal regard to those claims and rights of others which no human authority can enforce. He holds sacred the *reputation* and the *feelings* of others, not less than their *persons* and their *property;* and abstains accordingly from all slander, from all uncharitable judgment, from all offensive haughtiness, arrogance, and insolent demeanour, not less than from acts of fraud or violence. He not only revolts with the deepest aversion from the commission of all intentional wrong, but is exempt

* "Existunt etiam sœpe injuriæ calumniâ quâdam, et nimis callidâ, sed malitiosâ juris interpretatione; ex quo illud, *summum jus summa injuria*, factum est jam tritum sermone proverbium." Cicero de Officiis, Lib. 1. cap. x.

from that secret bias of self-partiality, which is the source of so much undesigned injustice. He sees the rights of others as clearly, and guards them as carefully as his own, and is incapable of the slightest leaning in his judgment to the side of interest. He transfers himself in imagination into the situation of others, in order to judge of their feelings and appreciate their expectations; and whatever he is conscious that he should himself in similar circumstances expect from others, that he considers as the rule or standard to which he should conform his own behaviour. On all occasions he acts upon the golden rule of doing to others as he would that others should do to him. Guided by this great principle of social equity, he thinks it not sufficient to abstain from injury, but feels himself called upon, as a member of society, for exertions of positive usefulness. He regards the wants of others, and more especially the wants of those whom the ties of nature have rendered dependent on him, as constituting not merely an *occasion*, but a *claim* for the exercise of his good offices. He cannot feel justified to his own conscience in withholding from others any service which he has it in his power to render; for it appears to his mind a species of injustice, to disappoint

expectations and wishes which he is conscious he should himself entertain in similar circumstances, and which he cannot therefore but acknowledge to be reasonable.

SECTION III.

OF VERACITY.

As some of our propensities and passions, without leading us to infringe the rights of others, seek their gratification by means of falsehood, hence the occasion for another restraint, which constitutes the duty of Veracity. In as far as deceit is the means employed in the commission of any injustice, this duty, it is evident, coincides with the foregoing. But truth may be violated without any violation, at least without any *obvious* violation of justice; as by those, for instance, who court the great with artful flattery, or mean dissimulation; by those who aim at praise or admiration by means of empty boasts or hypocritical pretences; or by those who seek advancement, or avoid reproach, by professions contrary to their inward sentiments. Hence arises the necessity of distinctly enforcing the duty of Veracity. It requires no

laboured argument to shew, that the observance of this duty is scarcely less necessary to the welfare of society than justice, with which, indeed, as we have said, it partly coincides: for where would be the pleasure, where the advantage of social intercourse, were all confidence between man and man destroyed? The importance of this virtue to the happiness of individuals is, also, in most cases, equally obvious; for deceitful arts and lying stratagems, with whatever caution they be practised, are never free from the danger of detection; and the constant fear which this occasions, the constant anxiety and perplexity which arise from the difficulty of maintaining consistency in falsehood, are topics of common remark, which clearly shew the folly of all such conduct. With respect to those cases which involve no danger, as they involve no direct infringement of the rights of others, the obligation to veracity rests on nicer considerations, which, though they may not operate on every mind, are not less just on that account. That falsehood, even though it be not used as an instrument of injustice, but merely as a means of promoting the interest of the individual, without being at all injurious to others, should be held in general detestation by man-

kind, will not appear surprising, if we recur to those principles which have been shewn to govern the formation of our moral sentiments and affections;—if we consider how natural it is, that we should dislike and disapprove, not only that from which evil is *actually* suffered, but whatever appears *capable* of being a source of evil. The man who can descend to the meanness of falsehood, for the sake of accomplishing an interested purpose, is evidently capable of any deceit, or any treachery, to which he may be tempted. He is altogether unworthy of confidence, and no one, acquainted with his character, would ever think of choosing him for a friend, or committing to him the smallest trust. No wonder, then, that a man of such character should be an object of general contempt and aversion. And if to be regarded with contempt and aversion, be an evil justly to be dreaded, it is clearly the part of wisdom in every individual to hold inviolable the rule of truth, whatever immediate advantage may arise from transgressing it. For though detection may not actually follow, there is always such imminent danger of detection attending all deceitful practices, that the plainest dictates of prudence admonish us to avoid them. If, then,

it be wise, to hold the rule of truth inviolable, it is equally so, to form our character in such a way as will best secure us in the observance of it. So that even supposing a case of falsehood so harmless or so secret, as to involve no evil consequences, either from interference with others' rights, or from the influence of example, or from the loss or risk of reputation, still there will remain abundant reason for avoiding it, in the injurious effect which it must have upon the character,—in its tendency to impair the strength of moral principle, to introduce the habit of deceit, and thus to lead the way to further and grosser deviations from integrity, which may not be so harmless or so free from danger. These considerations will suffice to shew, that there is some degree of mischief, and therefore of guilt, even in those most venial falsehoods, which have no other object than to excite amusement, by rendering an anecdote more lively, or a jest more pointed. Even such falsehoods will be cautiously avoided by one who regards and acts upon the important principle, before referred to, of doing and abstaining from many things merely for the sake of habit.* For "white lies always intro-

* See above, p. 186, and the passage there referred to.

duce others of a darker complexion. I have seldom," says Paley, "known any one who deserted truth in trifles, that could be trusted in matters of importance. Nice distinctions are out of the question, upon occasions which, like those of speech, return every hour. The habit, therefore, of lying, when once formed, is easily extended, to serve the designs of malice or interest;—like all habits, it spreads indeed of itself."* These remarks, however, do not apply to *avowed fiction*, which being both given and received as an effort of invention, cannot be considered as any departure from veracity. This duty prohibits those fictions only which are intended to deceive. It prohibits every species of fraud, by whatever means it be practised or attempted. It forbids, therefore, not only direct or literal falsehood, but every kind of subterfuge or equivocation, and every artifice which is meant to deceive, whether the deception be accomplished by words or by actions; for it is evidently a poor delusion to suppose, that, because our words may be literally true, or because we may not *utter* a falsehood, we therefore escape the guilt of a lie, while knowing that our words will be taken in

* See Paley's Moral Philosophy, Book III., Part I., ch. 15. and Note c c.

a wrong sense, or that our actions will be construed so as to mislead. In considering this duty, some cases may occur, in which it will be difficult to determine whether a departure from truth be chargeable or not with the guilt of lying. These cases have been largely dwelt upon by that class of ethical writers who have treated morality as a science of Casuistry. But having declined entering into those discussions which relate to the niceties or difficulties of justice, as in-appropriate to the object of practical morality, for the same reason I shall avoid a similar discussion on the present subject. That a departure from truth is sometimes allowable in cases of extraordinary emergence, as when we have to deal with persons who, by acts of open outrage, have dissolved with respect to themselves the common relations and obligations of social life, or who, by manifest insanity, have lost their title to be treated as rational beings, will scarcely be denied by the most rigid moralist. But the statement of cases of this kind is of little use towards inspiring the love of truth. There is little danger of our being too rigid in observing the law of truth; while, on the other hand, there is great danger of our stretching too far, or wrongly

applying the exceptions which might be stated. They who are actuated by the love of truth, will be sufficiently directed by the dictates of common sense, where it may be necessary or allowable to depart from it; while those who are strangers to this disposition, will only pervert discussions of casuistry into excuses for their own laxity of principle. It is more suitable to the object of the practical moralist to exhibit in all its native loveliness the character in which veracity is become an habitual and prevailing principle. To one of such character, it is not merely a matter of prudence to avoid deceit. It is the object of his perfect scorn and deepest loathing; and no prospect of advantage, no fear of suffering can ever tempt him to swerve in any degree from the plain line of truth and honour. Nor will he think it sufficient to avoid direct falsehood merely, but will hold in even greater abhorrence those crafty artifices by which some contrive to secure the advantages of a lie, while they fancy they escape the guilt. He will disdain to use ambiguous language for the purpose of being misunderstood, or even to wish that his words should be construed in a sense different from their real meaning. His words are always

the clear and faithful index of his mind, free not only from all gross and direct falsehood, but from every kind of prevarication which might serve the purposes of falsehood. Not satisfied, moreover, with merely shunning all intentional deceit, he is scarcely even capable of that unwary misrepresentation which so oft arises from some secret bias; for when speaking on any subject in which his own interest, or that of his friends or his party is concerned, he is cautious lest any undue partiality should give a false colouring to his statements, by leading him to conceal or soften what is unfavourable, or to bring forward and magnify what is favourable to his views. Not only his words, indeed, but his whole conduct is conformable to the law of truth; for he is incapable of any dissimulation, and desires not to appear to the world any other than he really is. He cannot, for interested purposes, fawn upon and caress those whom he inwardly despises, nor seek applause by any affectation of sentiments which his heart disowns. He cannot act a borrowed character, nor change his language and behaviour to suit the change of times or circumstances. He is the same in every company; on all occasions he speaks exactly what

he thinks, and is exactly what he appears to be. Prudence, indeed, may sometimes induce him to conceal his sentiments in cases where there is no necessity for disclosing them; but no apprehension of consequences, no fear of reproach or ridicule will ever tempt him to disavow or misrepresent them, whenever he is called upon to make them known. It is scarcely necessary to add, that he is as faithful to his promises as he is sincere in his professions. For there are some who, without any intention to deceive, from mere thoughtlessness or easiness of temper, are lavish of promises, which they are afterwards incapable or careless of fulfilling. But the man of strict veracity is careful to excite no expectations which he cannot afterwards satisfy. He makes no shew of kindness beyond what he really feels; he utters no promises which he does not sincerely purpose to perform; and his word, once given, is a sacred pledge, which may always be relied on with the most perfect confidence. Such is the character of the man in whom the love of truth is become an habitual and prevailing principle. It is needless to enlarge in its praise; for every one will allow that it is just the character which he would wish to find in all with whom he has transactions or intercourse.

SECTION IV.

OF MODERATION.

There is yet another principle of moral restraint, distinguished by the name of Moderation, which consists in confining our desires and affections within those limits which sober reason and a just valuation of things prescribe. The foregoing duties of restraint merely prohibit certain specified modes of gratifying our desires or passions; but this aims to rectify them in a more direct manner, by rendering them exactly proportionate to the true value or importance of their objects. It prohibits all excess in our desires or attachments, even when they do not seek their gratification by any forbidden means. Its chief end is to guard us against that disappointment which arises from fixing our hopes or affections too fondly on any earthly object, and the considerations which it employs for this purpose are mostly founded on the uncertainty of our pursuits and the precariousness of our possessions. It is evidently the part of wisdom not to form any expectations which are likely to be frustrated, and not to make our happiness altogether dependent

on any acquisitions or possessions which we are liable to lose. It should, therefore, moderate the thirst of fame, to consider the caprice which actuates mankind in the distribution of their applause; the envy which is sure to be excited by pre-eminence; the vigilant, if not malicious observation to which conspicuous station is exposed, and the disregard or neglect which is often experienced by those of best desert. It should also check the eagerness for gain, to reflect on the cares and anxieties which wealth invariably brings, on its insufficiency of itself to ensure happiness, on its tendency to generate numberless unreal wants, and on the danger of its becoming a subject of discord or a means of corruption to those whose welfare is our dearest object. On similar grounds moderation is proper even with respect to some of our more benevolent affections; for we may love our friends or relatives so fondly as to be entirely blind to their defects, or to incur the danger of a total destruction of our happiness, should the objects of our attachment be torn from us by death. The man of moderation, in short, regards all objects with calm and dispassioned views; contemplates them in every aspect; estimates their worth by the steady light of reason, and not by

the illusive glare of passion; and regulates his desires and expectations accordingly. He is, therefore, no enthusiast in any thing. In every undertaking he sees the possibilities of failure, as well as the chances of success. In every object which is wont to engage the eager desires and pursuits of men, he foresees the evils, not less than the advantages, which its attainment will bring. The same moderation extends also to his opinions. In every controversy, which engages the attention and divides the sentiments of mankind, he considers what may be said on both sides, is fully aware both of the strength and weakness of each contending cause or party, and if he decides in favour of either, it is only, in general, with a calm and moderate preference, which is far removed from the blind and intemperate zeal of bigotry or party spirit. By enthusiasts and bigots a man of such character is sure to be regarded with contempt, as indifferent about objects of the first importance, or lukewarm in the best of causes. And perhaps it must be admitted that he is not the man who is altogether fitted for propagating opinions, or for embarking in "enterprises of great pith and moment." In fact, it is by enthusiasts chiefly, that all great

changes in the opinions or institutions of mankind have been brought about. They are not moderate men, who usually make the greatest figure in the world. But moderation, rightly exercised, is still a quality which has its own advantages, and is undoubtedly entitled to a place among the virtues. It may be carried too far: it may damp the ardour of exertion in pursuits which are truly deserving of the warmest zeal. But the genuine virtue consists in that state of mind which is accordant with the dictates of the most enlightened reason. As there are objects which even to the most enlightened reason must appear supremely important, so there is a judicious zeal, a rational enthusiasm, perfectly compatible with the spirit of true moderation. But with regard to those objects which usually engage the warm desires and eager pursuit of men, moderation is evidently the part of wisdom. It consists in seeing all objects in their true light; in estimating them according to their true value; and its advantage is, that it saves from all those bitter disappointments and fatal errors, to which inordinate expectations and undue desires so often lead.

Having now briefly stated and enforced those general duties which regard our passions and desires collectively taken, I proceed to enter into a more minute detail of the rules of duty, as they relate to each propensity or affection considered separately.

CHAP. III.

DUTIES RELATING TO THE DESIRE AND PURSUIT OF PLEASURE.

By the term Pleasure may be understood, first, the grosser pleasures of sense, consisting in the gratifications of Appetite, and next, the more refined enjoyments of action, novelty, society, taste, and imagination, or what are commonly termed Amusements.

The proper regulation of the appetites constitutes the virtues of *Temperance* and *Chastity*. These virtues, it is almost needless to observe, do not consist in totally eradicating our animal appetites, or in refusing them every degree of gratification. They were given us evidently for very important purposes, and their gratification within certain limits is not only allowable, but necessary. That ascetic morality which formerly attempted the entire suppression of the animal appetites, and ascribed peculiar sanctity to those who bound themselves by vows of celibacy, and practised the severest absti-

nence compatible with the bare support of life, needs now no arguments to shew its inconsistency with all just views of human duty. But though the entire suppression of the appetites is not required, yet it is obviously necessary for the welfare both of the individual and of society, that they should be kept under careful restraint, and confined most strictly within certain limits. These limits, with respect to one of our appetites, are in part prescribed in every civilized country by those laws of state, which sanction and protect the institution of marriage.* Laws of state, however, form but a very imperfect rule of restraint, as there are numberless modes of pernicious sensual indulgence, which those laws cannot punish, and do not even attempt to prohibit. And even the more refined laws of morality cannot precisely mark the limit where innocent enjoyment ends and intemperance begins. All that the moralist can do is to enforce in general terms the duty of restraint, by pointing out the mischievous consequences of excessive indulgence, leaving it to every individual to determine for himself the point of excess, but recommending it as an obvious dictate of prudence, to act upon the principle of keeping on

* On this subject see Paley's Moral Philosophy. Book III. Part III. ch. 1—8.

the safe side, rather than push indulgence to the utmost allowable extent. The evil consequences which usually flow from excessive sensual indulgence are the following.

1. It is ruinous to health. Need I, in proof of this, detail the various maladies which intemperance is so well known to generate? Need I hold up the revolting picture of the worn-out voluptuary, or describe the shattered nerves, the wasted vigour, the langour of body, and dejection of mind, which are the woful fruit of his excesses? "Could I lay open to your view," says a well-known writer, "the monuments of death, they would read a lecture in favour of moderation much more powerful than any which the most eloquent preacher can give. You would behold the graves peopled with the victims of intemperance. You would behold those chambers of darkness hung round, on every side, with the trophies of luxury, drunkenness, and sensuality. So numerous would you find those martyrs of iniquity, that it may safely be asserted, where war or pestilence have slain their thousands, intemperate pleasure has slain its ten thousands."* Youth and vigour,

* Blair's Sermons. Vol. III. Serm. XII.

may long, indeed, sustain, without apparent injury, the dangerous freedoms of excess. But sooner or later its consequences must be felt. It preys with silent tooth upon the vitals of the frame. It spreads, with unobserved progress, a secret poison through the veins, and the most robust constitution must sink at length beneath its slowly-consuming power. Thus days of anguish and nights of weariness, premature decrepitude, or untimely death,—these are the bitter penalties of the voluptuary's folly, this the sad conclusion of his infatuated course.

2. But long before intemperance has produced any perceptible ill effects upon the body, it enervates the vigour of the mind, and destroys the inward springs of cheerfulness and activity.* When the powers of life are exhausted by debauchery or clogged with excess, it is utterly impossible for the mind to be alert and active; and however exquisite for the moment may be the enjoyments of the sensualist, they are dearly purchased by those long intervals of listlessness and ennui, which invariably succeed immode-

* Corpus onustum
Hesternis vitiis, animum quoque prægravat una,
Atque adfligit humo divinæ particulam auræ.
HORACE.

rate excitement. Light spirits, cheerful temper, and vigorous powers of thought and action,—those lasting and substantial blessings which form the staple of the happiness of human life, —are blessings which the sons of temperance only are privileged to enjoy.

3. Together with the ruin of health and faculties, the ruin of property follows with equal certainty in the train of lawless pleasure. The resources of wealth, in some few cases, may be adequate to supply the large demands of luxury; but it is obvious that, with the great majority, a course which at once relaxes the nerves of industry, and leads to a wasteful expenditure of its fruits, must soon terminate in a state of penury, to which the contrast with former indulgences will add a tenfold bitterness.

4. But great as these evils are, they are not the worst of the mischiefs which flow from sensual excess. A far more serious consequence consists in its depraving influence upon the character, and in the strong temptations which it presents to crimes of deeper die. By creating many additional wants, while at the same time it diminishes the power of honestly supplying

them, it leads too frequently to desperate or unlawful means of gain, and the course which began, with pleasure, ends often in infamy and ruin. By polluting the imagination or inflaming the blood, it gives to all the animal appetites a most unnatural vehemence. From small indulgences which excite not much alarm of conscience, it leads, by imperceptible steps, to greater and yet greater transgressions, till at length its empire is confirmed by habit, and all attempt at resistance is abandoned as hopeless. The path of pleasure is a downward and slippery path, upon which if once we enter, we know not where our rash career will terminate. We may begin with the sincere purpose of going only to a certain length in our indulgence; but as well might we venture within the circle of the devouring whirlpool, expecting to gaze upon it, and then return in safety. By yielding to a first temptation to what appears an inconsiderable transgression, we render ourselves less able to withstand the next which leads us further; and thus, by an easy and most insidious process, we are conducted from one degree of guilt to another, till we find ourselves committing, with little hesitation, actions, the very thought of which would once have shocked us.

Then habit creates a constant craving for enjoyments which at first were only rarely tasted, and thus completes the depravation of the mind, by hardening it in guilt; for it is not possible to live, like the habitual sensualist, in the constant practice of violating the plainest rules of duty, without having silenced altogether the voice of conscience, and shaken off all troublesome remains of virtuous principle.

It is a common error of the votary of pleasure, to suppose that, so long as he steers clear of every positive infringement of the rights of others, he is chargeable only with the less heinous guilt of imprudence towards himself. Imagining that the only possible effect of his excesses is the impairment of his own health or fortune, he sees no great harm or guilt in running this risk for the sake of his beloved enjoyments. Asserting his undoubted right to dispose of himself and his own as he thinks fit, and openly avowing, in the usual language of the dissolute, that "a short life and a merry one" is the object of his deliberate choice,—who, he asks, is entitled to complain, or how can the mischief of his conduct, if mischief there be, extend beyond himself? But not to mention,

what has already been insisted on, the criminality of a merely useless life, few men are so completely isolated as not to be connected by ties of some kind with their brethren of mankind, and from those connexions duties must arise, the neglect of which must be productive of mischief. Our life, our strength, our faculties, our fortune, are not exclusively our own; but friends, children, neighbours, country, have an undeniable claim upon them; and if we squander them away in selfish gratifications, we not merely entail unnumbered ills upon ourselves, but rob these many claimants of their due. Seldom, however, is this all the mischief; for seldom can the voluptuary pursue his own gratification without involving others in his guilt; and those excesses which are harmless to himself, may prove the ruin of those whom he misleads. How fraught with every evil are the vile seducer's arts! How often have they inflicted in the breast of domestic affection a pang more poignant far than death itself could cause! —how often driven their lovely victim to the lowest depths of vice and misery! And what but the prevailing practice of licentious pleasure, supports and perpetuates the horrid trade of those unhappy beings, who haunt the dark

recesses of every populous town? Besides, how knows the voluptuary what may be his conduct in those moments when reason shall have lost its power to restrain him? How knows he what mischiefs he may not commit in the temporary madness of brutal intoxication; to what desperate expedients he may not be driven, when his prodigality has involved him in embarrassment; or what crimes he may not perpetrate, when rivals cross his path, and thwart his schemes of pleasure? The tragedies of life have often proved that licentious pleasure and deeds of bloodshed are not far more remote from one another.

The foregoing observations, though apparently applicable only to those who cast off all restraint, and riot in all the excesses of illicit pleasure, contain, nevertheless, some lessons of instruction useful to all; for who is there that is not liable to yield too much to the demands of appetite? We must not imagine that we keep within the bounds of temperance by merely avoiding the grosser extremes of sensual indulgence. The luxurious mode of living which prevails among the higher and middling classes of society, leads many to be guilty of habitual,

though less obvious intemperance, which it is the more necessary to point out and reprobate, as it is an error which too commonly escapes the notice of those who are guilty of it. They crowd the day with a needless number of meals; they load their tables with a superfluous variety of food; they pamper appetite with a succession of dainties, regarding what is palatable more than what is wholesome; and thus, though they never very far exceed the bounds of moderation, yet by daily exceeding them a little, they slowly undermine the constitution, and bring upon themselves, more slowly indeed, but not less surely, than by flagrant intemperance, that invariable scourge of the slaves of appetite, a diseased and enervated frame. "When I behold," says Addison, "a fashionable table set out in all its magnificence, I fancy that I see gouts and dropsies, fevers and lethargies, with other innumerable distempers, lying in ambuscade among the dishes."* It will not be denied that the human frame may be supported in vigour by a much smaller quantity of food than most persons are in the habit of taking; and it is reasonable to suppose that whatever is taken beyond what nature requires, can

* Spectator. No. 195.

only serve to clog and impede the animal functions, and generate a variety of noxious humours. And if we consider how much the spirits and temper are affected by the state of the body, more especially by those disorders which invariably arise from pampered appetite, a strict attention to the rules of temperance will appear of no small moment to our virtue and our happiness.

The second class of pleasures, which includes what are usually termed amusements, though not so gross in their nature, nor so fatal in their consequences when carried to excess, as the pleasures of appetite, demand yet much limitation and restraint. The nature of these pleasures may easily be understood by referring to the foregoing history of human affections. They all arise from that love of action and excitement which has been pointed out as one of our natural principles; some consisting chiefly in bodily action, as the sports of the field and other athletic exercises; others consisting entirely in mental excitement, as games of chance or skill, reading, company, theatrical entertainments, and the pursuits of taste. These pleasures the strictest morality cannot with reason entirely prohi-

bit. Enjoyed in moderation, they are not merely allowable, but useful and desirable, as a needful relief from sedentary or studious occupations. But this purpose itself implies the necessity of great restraint in their indulgence, as it is obvious, that, when made a primary object of pursuit, they assume an entirely different character. It is almost essential, indeed, to their being enjoyed as pleasures, that they should be only occasionally and sparingly tasted; for as it is only after labour that rest can be truly enjoyed, so amusement can afford but little gratification, unless we are prepared for it by previous occupation. A state of excitement, moreover, is necessarily, in its own nature, transient; and if the intervals between the periods of excitement be not employed in serious and useful pursuits, they will assuredly be intervals of ennui, and peevishness, and misery. With respect to consequences, excessive indulgence in this class of pleasures, though not so fatal to health as excess in sensual pleasure, is often not less injurious to fortune, nor less pernicious in its influence upon character. But as these pleasures are of various kinds, the subject requires that they should be considered separately; and they may be treated of under the following

heads—Sports; Game of chance and skill; Reading; Company; Theatrical Entertainments; and the Pursuits of Taste.

1. Sports. To athletic sports in general no objection can be made, provided only they be pursued with moderation, and not allowed to engross the time which should be devoted to more important business. But one class of sports, I mean the sports of the field, lie open to a peculiar objection, which is sufficient perhaps to justify an entire prohibition. The objection is, that they cannot be enjoyed without occasioning suffering to brute animals. Now though it is undeniable that we have a right to sacrifice the lives of brute animals for our own subsistence, or to prevent the mischief which we might suffer from the too great increase of their numbers, yet there is a plain distinction between this necessary destruction, and that which is made for mere purposes of sport. "I would not enter," says an amiable poet,

> "I would not enter on my list of friends,
> (Though graced with polish'd manners, and fine sense,
> Yet wanting sensibility,) the man
> Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
> An inadvertent step may crush the snail

That crawls at evening in the public path;
But he that has humanity, forewarn'd,
Will step aside, and let the reptile live.*

The same humanity which thus spares the reptile, cannot possibly regard with approbation amusements which consist in the wanton torture and destruction of brute animals; and though the unfeeling may laugh at such scruples, every rightly constituted mind will warmly concur in the poet's sentiments. Cruelty to brute animals prepares the way for cruelty to man; and nothing surely can be considered harmless, which tends to foster so odious a vice.

2. Games of Chance and Skill. To such amusements, used only as an occasional relaxation, no reasonable objection can be made, except when they are allowed to supersede that more rational entertainment which might be found in conversation. On this ground, card-playing, in the extent to which it is at present carried, is justly censurable as an offence against good taste, and a strange perversion of the ends of social intercourse: for if to unbend the mind, to cherish social and friendly feelings, to become better acquainted

* Cowper's Task. Book vi.

with, and better disposed towards one another, and to gain improvement by the interchange of thought,—if these be the ends for which we meet together, how completely are they all precluded by this absurd practice, which, in the midst of those whose wit might delight, or whose knowledge might improve us, absorbs the mind in the calculations of a game, banishes every useful topic of conversation, calls forth none but paltry or unkindly feelings, and leaves nothing which can afterwards be reflected on with satisfaction. Gaming, in the worst sense of that term, lies open to still more weighty objections; but will be more appropriately treated of in the following chapter.

3. Reading. Books of amusement, provided they be innocent, and provided also they be read with moderation, are not without their use, as they may often serve to furnish needful relaxation to the wearied mind, to divert the attention from distressing thoughts or painful feelings, or to fill up voids in our time which might not otherwise be so innocently spent. To some works, indeed, of this class, a much higher value and importance belongs. Under the attractive garb of fiction, they inculcate in a most

forcible and impressive manner the most useful lessons of morality; and by the faithful delineations which they contain of human character and manners, afford in some measure the advantages, without the dangers, of experience. Great care, however, should be exercised in the choice of books of this description; for a large proportion of the works of fiction are not merely despicable from the empty trash which they contain, but positively pernicious in their moral tendency. They present the most delusive views of human life; fill the mind of youth with romantic and sentimental notions; and by their high-wrought representations of unattainable happiness and imaginary perfection, render the sober realities of life insipid, if not revolting. What is worse, they not unfrequently instil the most pernicious principles, and disguise the native deformity of vice by the engaging dress in which they array it. Selection, therefore, is advisable for all, but especially necessary for the young, whose immature and inexperienced minds are peculiarly open to these delusive impressions. And even the least exceptionable of these productions should be used with moderation; for nothing can be more detrimental to the intellectual faculties than the habit of reading

works of entertainment to excess. The mind, habituated to the excitement of novelty, becomes incapable of persevering long in any one pursuit, or of fixing its attention on subjects which require deep reflection or patient research. By immoderate indulgence, therefore, in reading of this description, such a distaste is acquired for every more serious study, as must necessarily prevent all mental improvement. As reading constitutes a principal employment of a very large class of persons, it is important that just ideas should be entertained respecting the proper mode of pursuing it; for pursued as it usually is, it hardly deserves to be considered as any thing better than a pastime. Many persons who are in the habit of reading, are apt to imagine, that so long as they confine themselves to useful books, they must be making a profitable employment of their time; while the fact is, that by the indolent and hasty way in which they devour books, and by their neglecting altogether to exercise their own reflections upon what they read, they altogether fail of that improvement which they expect, and pervert what ought to be a serious business into a mere expedient for whiling away time. It is with reference to this indolent habit of reading with-

out reflection, that Dr. Butler very justly observes,—"By this means, time, even in solitude, is happily got rid of without the pain of attention; neither is any part of it more put to the account of idleness, (one can scarce forbear saying, is spent with less thought) than great part of that which is spent in reading."* Reading, in short, by those who have their time at their own command, should be considered not as a mere amusement, but as a serious and important business. And though, of course, they will need occasional relaxation, yet let them beware of making their reading altogether a relaxation; let them remember that it is only by reading what is solid and useful, and not even then without the assiduous exercise of their own reflections accompanying what they read, that any considerable progress can be made in mental improvement. The mere passive reception of other men's ideas serves not in any degree to strengthen the judging and reasoning powers, but tends, on the contrary, greatly to impair them, because it is apt to create the habit of adopting implicitly the sentiments of others, and fills the mind with a confused assemblage of opinions liable to be changed

* See the Preface to his Sermons.

by every fresh author, or overthrown by every casual disputant.*

4. Company. The enjoyments of social intercourse and rational conversation are the purest and best of all our pleasures, and while they afford a seasonable refreshment after the toils of business or study, may serve, if our company be well selected, to mend the heart, and improve the understanding. Yet even with respect to these enjoyments, some self-restraint is necessary: for if they be allowed to engross too large a portion of our time, and cause us to neglect in any measure our more important duties; or if they lead us into a style of living inconsistent with our circumstances; however well chosen our company may be, and however rationally our intercourse be conducted, the pleasure and improvement are in this case purchased at too great a cost. I need not add how much more culpable is the abuse of this gratification, when the hours of social intercourse are given to senseless mirth or brutal intemperance, or spent in frivolous, impure, or censorious conversation.

* See Stewart's Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind. Ch. vi. Sec. 5.

5. Theatrical Amusements. Most of the observations which have been made respecting novel reading, will apply also to this species of amusement. Plays, like novels, are fictitious representations of human life and character, and were they always faithful and well chosen representations, they would be not only an allowable amusement, but a very effectual instrument of moral instruction. Unfortunately, however, it happens, that a very large proportion of the productions of the drama are very exceptionable in point of moral tendency. Too often they serve no other purpose than to palliate or disguise certain fashionable vices, and to represent in an engaging light characters of highly dangerous example. The morality, in fact, which is inculcated on the stage, is not that pure and high toned morality which religion sanctions and requires, but a partial and imperfect system, formed upon the maxims, and adapted to favour the prejudices and palliate the vices of that class of society by which these amusements are most frequented. The favourite hero of the stage is the man of pleasure and dissipation, who is often drawn in such engaging colours, and adorned with so many traits of heroism, magnanimity, and generosity, that his

vices themselves derive a grace from their association with so much excellence; and as this character is not unfrequently contrasted with one of an opposite stamp, in which the exterior of virtue and piety is represented as the hypocritical disguise of meanness, villainy, and every secret vice, suspicion is by this means thrown upon every appearance of principles stricter than the convenient code of fashionable morality. Independently, moreover, of these considerations, there is an objection to which few productions of the drama, even among the least exceptionable, do not lie open. The weapon which they mostly employ against vice is the lash of satire. Now though this weapon may be very suitable, where only the lighter follies and weaknesses of mankind are to be corrected, yet for the correction of more serious vices, it is an instrument most unfit. These require to be censured with a graver aspect;—not indeed with that asperity which can only wound the pride, and excite the resentment of the offender, but with that tempered severity which evinces a sincere desire to persuade to reformation. Crimes, by being laughed at, seem to lose somewhat of their enormity; they become confounded with those lighter follies and weaknesses

which are the only proper objects of ridicule; and their authors are commonly but too well satisfied to escape, even on these terms, the severer censure which they merit. If to these considerations we add the licentious species of wit with which too many dramatic performances abound, the utter frivolity of many others, and the many profligate characters of whom the theatre is a favourite resort; it will appear evident, that this is a species of amusement which cannot be largely indulged in without some danger to our virtuous principles.

6. The Pursuits of Taste. By this term I mean to denote the pleasures which arise from music, painting, and the other fine arts, whether it arise from the actual exercise of these arts, or from collecting and studying their several productions. Austere and illiberal must that system of morality be, which would altogether forbid these elegant pleasures—a morality fit only for the monk's cloister or the hermit's cell. That they form, upon the whole, an innocent and rational recreation; that they furnish a proper object of employment to those who enjoy abundant leisure; and that the taste which can relish, and the skill which can impart them

to others, are desirable and useful accomplishments, none but enthusiasts will venture to dispute. At the same time in these, not less than in other modes of pleasure, there is a limit which ought not to be transgressed. Pursuits of this kind are only amusements, and ought not, therefore, to constitute the main business of life, to any but those who follow them as professions. A mind well cultivated, and stored with solid and useful knowledge, is surely an endowment far more desirable than the finest taste or the most perfect skill in elegant accomplishments. And if even the pursuit of knowledge with a view merely to selfish gratification be censurable, because inconsistent with that higher duty which requires that every one should lead a life of usefulness, much more must we condemn the conduct of those, who, with means and opportunities of engaging in more important occupations, nevertheless make these amusements their serious and only business. It may, therefore, be justly questioned whether the present fashionable system of female education be not injurious in this respect, that it allots too large a share of time and attention to pursuits of a merely ornamental nature, to the neglect, in some degree, of those which tend

to mental and moral improvement. It is also worthy of observation, that, besides the mischief which may arise from devoting too large a share of attention to these pursuits, there are dangers of another kind, which consist in the positive tendency of some to vitiate or mislead the unguarded mind. I allude particularly to the frivolous, and often worse than frivolous character of that class of poetry with which the art of music is usually allied. It is not perhaps sufficiently considered how subtle and insidious a poison may thus be instilled into the minds of those, from whom every impurity should be most carefully removed.

Having thus pointed out the evils of several particular kinds of pleasure, I shall conclude the subject with some observations respecting the pursuit of pleasure in general; and the truth which I would most earnestly impress upon the minds of my readers, is, that *pleasure is by no means enjoyed in the greatest degree by those who make it a leading object of pursuit.* It is enjoyed most when it comes unsought. A state of high excitement cannot be of long duration; and when it ceases, it leaves the mind incapable of relishing any ordinary or moderate

gratification. The more frequently we resort to high delights, the more we render them indispensable to our happiness; and as they are not frequently to be procured, the greater portion of our time must necessarily be spent in a state of discontent and listlessness. "There is hardly any delusion," observes a celebrated writer, "by which men are greater sufferers in their happiness, than by their expecting too much from what is called pleasure; that is, from those intense delights which vulgarly engross the name of pleasure. The very expectation spoils them. When they do come, we are often engaged in taking pains to persuade ourselves how much we are pleased, rather than enjoying any pleasure which springs naturally out of the object. And whenever we depend upon being vastly delighted, we always go home secretly grieved at missing our aim. Likewise, as has been observed just now, when this humour of being prodigiously delighted has once taken hold of the imagination, it hinders us from providing for, or acquiescing in, those gently soothing enjoyments, the due variety and succession of which are the only things that supply a vein or continued stream of happiness.—What I have been able," he adds, "to observe of that

part of mankind, whose professed pursuit is pleasure, and who are withheld in the pursuit by no restraints of fortune, or scruples of conscience, corresponds sufficiently with this account. I have commonly remarked in such men, a restless and inextinguishable passion for variety; a great part of their time to be vacant, and so much of it irksome; and that, with whatever eagerness and expectation they set out, they become, by degrees, fastidious in their choice of pleasure, languid in the enjoyment, yet miserable under the want of it."*

* Paley's Moral Philosophy. Book I. ch. vi. Some excellent sentiments on this subject will also be found in the same chapter, under the head which relates to the prudent constitution of the habits. The whole of the chapter, indeed, contains so much wisdom in a small compass, that it cannot be too frequently or too attentively perused. A letter also of Dr. Aikin's "on Cheap Pleasures" may be consulted with advantage. See Aikin's Letters to his Son. Vol. I. Let. xxvi.

CHAP. IV.

DUTIES RELATING TO THE DESIRE AND PURSUIT OF WEALTH.

The pursuit of wealth is evidently, to a certain extent, not only innocent, but laudable. For in its first origin it is nothing less than the pursuit of that which is indispensable to our very existence, and is therefore so far the most imperative of our duties. Nor does it cease to be laudable, even when it aims at something beyond the bare necessaries of life. For to procure its comforts and conveniences also, to remove ourselves beyond the *dread* of the formidable ills of abject poverty, and to secure competence and independence to ourselves and our families, is surely an object of reasonable, as well as natural desire. Poverty is an evil which duty, not less than inclination, prompts us to shun; and wealth, whatever may have been declaimed about it, confers substantial advantages, which render it, to a certain extent, a worthy object of pursuit. A state of moderate affluence inspires a feeling of independence favourable

to many virtues; bestows leisure for the liberal pursuits of knowledge; enables parents to provide in the best possible way for the education and settlement of their children, and puts into the hands of all who may enjoy it, the means of more extensive usefulness. And if we consider the subject in a more general point of view, we shall find that the pursuit of this object, under certain restraints, is highly favourable to human improvement. It is this which renders life a scene of constant activity, and calls all our faculties into useful exercise. It is this which excites the liberal spirit of commerce, which leads to the cultivation of a variety of useful arts; which, by rendering us subservient to each other's benefit, draws closer the bonds of society, and unites even distant nations in amicable intercourse. It is this, in fine, which leads to national opulence and civilization; and wherever opulence and civilization exist, there knowledge is cultivated and diffused; there liberty best flourishes; there inquiry prevails, and the shades of error and superstition retire before it; there schemes of enlarged benevolence are carried into effect, and every undertaking is promoted which tends to ennoble and meliorate the condition of mankind. Such be-

ing the important benefits, both national and individual, which flow from the pursuit of wealth, to speak of it in terms of unqualified reprobation, would be manifestly absurd; and that utter contempt of wealth which some moralists have so much extolled, and some enthusiasts have endeavoured to reduce to practice, appears as little consistent with reason, as it is repugnant to the natural tendency of the human mind. Laudable, however, and proper as this pursuit is within certain limits, there is an extreme, to which if it be carried, it becomes a source of great and manifold evils.

I. It is pernicious and criminal, in the first place, if it lead us to violate the rights of others, that is, if it lead us to injure them either in their persons or their property. That all the members of society should consider themselves bound to hold inviolable the *personal security* of one another, is the first and plainest dictate of law and morality; since without this agreement, there could be no intercourse of man with man, and no security except in the most profound and inaccessible solitude. The observance of the *rights of property* is also equally necessary to the order, the happiness, and even the

existence of human society. Were all the objects of human wants placed immediately within our reach, and bestowed in the same inexhaustible abundance as the air, the water, and the herbage, the distinctions of property would never have either existed or been thought of; for all being in that case constantly provided with every thing needful to their comfort, no one could wish to appropriate to himself any part of a stock so plentiful, or think of excluding others from enjoying it to the fullest measure of their desires. But as the means of life and comfort are comparatively scarce, and cannot be procured but by labour and care, it is plainly necessary for the common good, that each should be left in undisturbed possession of that which his own exertions have procured. For otherwise, human society would be distracted with perpetual discord, and reduced at the same time to a state of the most wretched destitution; since no one would take the trouble to cultivate the ground, unless assured of enjoying the fruits of his labour, and without agriculture, the human race would be reduced to that scanty and precarious subsistence, which the chace or the earth's spontaneous produce might afford, but which would scarcely suffice to support a

hundredth part of the present population of the globe.* Considering further the great advantages of a positive nature, which arise from the institution and security of property; how, by leading to the division of labour, and the interchange of the various products of industry, it improves the arts, multiplies the accommodations of life, and promotes the activity, the mutual intercourse, and consequently the improvement of mankind; it will appear abundantly evident, that the observance of the rights of property is one of the most essential means of human happiness, and therefore a duty of indispensable obligation upon all the members of human society.† The several particular modes of conduct which this branch of duty forbids, are the following.

1. Deeds of violence and outrage, such as are perpetrated by the midnight thief or the highway robber; with which we may also class the oppression and rapine of the more powerful depredator, whom the law cannot overtake with punishment. The iniquity of all such practices is

* Note. Dd.

† On the History and Foundation of the Rights of Property, (a subject, the full discussion of which belongs rather to *Political* than to *Moral* Philosophy,) see Paley's Moral Philosophy, Book III. Pt. 1. ch. 1—4.

too obvious to require any laboured illustration, besides that they evince a hardened depravity, upon which the persuasions of the moralist would be spent in vain.

2. Secret arts of fraud and dishonesty. Here we may consider a little more at large the disadvantages and dangers of this mode of acquiring gain, and the great importance of the virtue of Honesty. To say nothing of that general distrust and suspicion which dishonest dealing tends to introduce into society, the evil of this conduct may be shewn by arguments more immediately applicable to the individual. That "honesty is the best policy," is a common maxim, the truth of which is confirmed by daily observation. Real wisdom and enlightened prudence certainly do not recommend dishonest practices as the best means of promoting our worldly interest. It is a mistaken, narrow, and short-sighted policy, which alone can resort to means of this description for the accomplishment of its ends. For what though the cunning and deceitful man should succeed in gaining the point which he has immediately in view, yet how rarely does it happen that fraudulent practices, particularly if they be frequently repeated,

can escape eventual detection; and when, in consequence of detection, a man has lost the confidence of others; when no one will give credit to his word, or trust in his fidelity; what immediate advantage that he may have gained will outweigh that greatest of disadvantages which consists in the loss of character. Nothing, it is well known, is so essential to a man's success in the world, as an unquestioned reputation for honour and fidelity; and when once this character is lost, adieu to all his hopes of future advancement. Thus it will almost invariably be found, that fraud defeats its own end, and that honest industry is the surest and most effectual, if not the most speedy means of rising in the world. Integrity has also a farther advantage in that ease of mind, and freedom from fear and perplexity, which naturally attends it. The dishonest man, who endeavours to compass his ends by fraud, falsehood, and stratagem, is perpetually upon thorns. He must be constantly on his guard to keep up appearances, lest by some inadvertence, or some unforeseen occurrence, his wiles should be detected, and his real character exposed. To secure credit to one falsehood, a hundred others must be added to it, and the utmost care will be required to make

them all consistent with one another. And when there is any thing in a man's conduct or character which requires to be concealed, innumerable are the occasions which bring him into peril, and however close he may wrap the cloak of disguise about him, he cannot be secure that every point is at all times guarded with sufficient care from the searching eyes of curiosity or malice. He must be aware that, whatever be his caution to preserve concealment, he is constantly liable to a thousand unforeseen occurrences, which may bring the truth to light. Some inconsistency or contradiction may appear in the tale of falsehood which he frames; some accomplice, in whom he trusted, may prove treacherous; some prying eye may chance to witness his guilt, when he thinks himself secure from observation; and then at once his character will be lost, his hopes frustrated, and his prospects blasted. Imagine then the uneasiness and anxiety of mind which the fear of this result must constantly create. What peace can he enjoy, who is thus continually environed by difficulties and perils? How thorny, intricate, and crooked is the path which he pursues; and how often must he find himself bewildered and perplexed amidst its mazes! Assuredly this is

not the course which wisdom recommends, and riches thus acquired are far indeed from being enviable.

3. Extortion or exorbitance in commercial dealings. Some who are too wise to commit themselves by acts of fraud, which would expose them, if detected, to infamy and ruin, are yet ever grasping at inordinate emolument, and without absolutely violating the laws, find means, by dint of impudence, or by taking advantage of the ignorance or simplicity of those with whom they deal, to extort more than a reasonable gain. This, it must be admitted, is generally a more successful method of acquiring wealth, than that of strictly honourable dealing, and many by such conduct have risen to affluence, without exposing themselves to public infamy or punishment: yet it is evidently a conduct not less repugnant to the rules of justice than the practices mentioned under the foregoing head. For though nothing may have been taken from another without his consent, yet if that consent have been obtained from his simplicity rendering him ignorant of his own rights, from his weakness indisposing him to long debate or litigation, or by means of our

own address in concealing circumstances, which, if known, would operate to our own disadvantage, we are guilty in truth of a species of injustice, and violate *equity* though we may not violate the *law*. And though this consideration may fail to influence those who act upon the narrowest principles of selfish interest, and scarcely own any other restraint than that which the law imposes, the man of honourable mind, who values his own esteem, or he who acts upon the benevolent and truly wise principle of doing to others as he would that they should do to him, will abstain as scrupulously from that injustice which he might commit with perfect safety, as from that which would subject him to the utmost severity of punishment.

II. The pursuit of wealth is criminal, in the second place, if it lead to servile conduct, mean compliances, false professions, or any conduct which is inconsistent with strict integrity, though it may not interfere with others' rights. Such are the means adopted by those called fortune-hunters; by the sycophants who court the rich and great with artful flattery, to gain the favour by which they hope to profit; by the servile adherents of power, who veer about with every

wind of fortune, and espouse whatever party may happen to predominate; and by the hypocrites who seek emoluments and honours by the zealous, though insincere, profession of popular opinions. Conduct of this description must be allowed to be a ready and generally successful method of rising in the world, and free, moreover, from that danger of punishment, which attends the violation of the rights of others; but its mischievous tendency to society is too obvious to leave its criminality doubtful, and its consequences to the individual himself are generally such as prove its folly to be equal to its guilt. It is pernicious to society, because it is that which creates corruption in a state; which supplies tyranny with its instruments of oppression; which prolongs in matters of religion the reign of error, and frustrates every scheme of public utility which happens to oppose the immediate interests of the great. It is hurtful also to the individual, because, though it may conduce to wealth and aggrandizement, it renders his character hateful and despicable to others, and robs him of that self-esteem without which all other means of happiness are vain. The man who is known to be capable of acting a deceitful part, can never be

the object of confidence or friendship; and though he may succeed in avoiding every act which would draw down signal punishment upon him, he cannot escape from that contempt and aversion, which hypocrisy and meanness never fail to inspire. Nor has such a character any resources in his own mind to compensate the scorn which he excites. If there be any vestige in his breast of moral principle, he cannot but feel that he deserves contempt; and this humiliating reflection, which will at times recur, however sedulously stifled, must poison all his sources of enjoyment, and render him, even in the height of success and affluence, an object more of pity than of envy.

III. The pursuit of wealth is criminal, in the third place, whenever we throw ourselves on chance or fortune, as in gaming, lotteries, hazardous speculations, or other practices of that description. When we fix our desires upon an object which it depends upon ourselves to obtain, and towards which by our own exertions we are constantly making gradual advances, we are cheered by that feeling of calm and assured hope, which is the sweetest solace of human life. But few states of mind, on the

other hand, are more truly wretched, than that of him who waits with trembling anxiety some doubtful issue, wherein his happiness is deeply staked, but which is placed entirely beyond his own control. He experiences that "hope deferred which maketh the heart sick;" that restless desire, which being unable to discharge itself in active efforts for the attainment of its object, can only corrode the breast wherein it dwells.* In the one case, moreover, success to some extent is certain; for even when the object of pursuit is not completely attained, the labour bestowed can hardly fail to leave some profitable result. But in the other, the state of anxious expectation is generally succeeded by total disappointment, which the mind, already unsettled by the harassing fluctuations of hope and fear, is wholly unprepared to support with fortitude, and a state of dark despair ensues, which not unfrequently subverts reason, and drives its victim to deeds of fatal rashness. But supposing the candidate of fortune successful, his lot even then is far from enviable; for seldom do we find

* "Hope, which appears to be of so much importance to our happiness, is of two kinds: where there is something to be done towards attaining the object of our hope, and where there is nothing to be done. The first alone is of any value; the latter being apt to corrupt into impatience, having no power but to sit still and wait, which soon grows tiresome."— Paley's Moral Philosophy. Book I. ch. vi.

that riches thus acquired are either rightly used or truly enjoyed. He who has raised himself to affluence by the gradual means of honest industry, feels a consciousness of desert, which greatly enhances the enjoyment of his acquisitions. He has the satisfaction to reflect, that he has not gained at the expense of others; but that, while enriching himself, he has been fulfilling the part of a useful member of society. Nor is he likely, moreover, to be insensible of the value, or improvident in the use, of that which he has acquired with so much pains and labour. But he, on the contrary, who has risen to sudden wealth by some lucky stroke of fortune, is apt to imagine that his fund can never be exhausted, and to lavish in thoughtless profusion what he has obtained so easily. And as the event which is gainful to him, brings disappointment and sorrow to others, this thought must greatly imbitter his enjoyment; or if it fail to do so, it is a proof too sure of a still more serious mischief, which furnishes yet stronger ground of objection to these means of gain. What wonder, indeed, that the feelings of benevolence should be blunted in him who cannot gain but at the expense of others! Or what but envious and malignant passions can be expected

to prevail among those whose wishes and interests are directly at variance ?

Such are the means of acquiring gain which duty altogether prohibits. The pursuit of wealth, however, requires restrictions, even when none but lawful means are employed; and while we scrupulously avoid the above dishonourable or pernicious modes of gain, we must also carefully guard against the undue ascendency of the desire itself. As wealth is the source of so many advantages, being not only the means of procuring every external comfort and pleasure, but conducive also to power, influence, and distinction; and as it is the object, moreover, of constant thought and constant employment to the great majority of mankind, we cannot wonder that long habit and strong associations thus combining should create a passion of very extensive and powerful influence over the human breast, and sometimes foster that passion to an excess which even the acknowledged legitimacy of its means cannot justify. It may be judged to have reached this blamable excess, when it produces the following effects.

1. When it renders the character selfish and

interested, and leads thereby to the commission of unintentional wrong. Whenever the passions are too ardently engaged in pursuit of any object, they invariably, in what concerns that object, mislead the judgment. Hence it happens that men too much devoted to the pursuit of wealth, are in danger of overlooking, and by that means of unintentionally infringing the rights of their fellow men. In every interference of claims or interests, which arises between themselves and others, they are incapable of forming an impartial judgment of what is right. Their opinion ever leans to the side of their own advantage; and without meaning to act unjustly, or even suspecting that they do so, they sometimes advance the most unwarrantable claims, or resist as encroachments the most reasonable claims of others. Hence arise endless contentions and bitter complaints of mutual injury, among men who are by no means wanting in a regard to duty, and who would feel aggrieved by the imputation of wilful injustice.

2. When it occasions the neglect of higher duties and more important objects. There are men who appear to live for no other end than to accumulate. Schemes of gain so constantly

engross their thoughts, and business so entirely occupies their time, that they seem to have no idea of any nobler ambition or worthier object of their care. In minds thus sordidly engaged, no elevated or generous feelings can be expected to dwell. To such, the exalted hopes of religion and the expansive feelings of benevolence must be alike foreign and unknown. Where Mammon holds such undivided sway, what place is left for the affections due to God? Where the affairs of this world so entirely absorb the mind, how can its views extend to the glorious but distant prospect of an everlasting futurity? And how is it possible that feelings of benevolence should coexist with this engrossing avarice, which is always eager to grasp and retain, what those feelings would prompt to relinquish or bestow? We shall find, accordingly, that they in whom the thirst of gain has attained this undue sway, are generally characterized by a narrow selfishness, which renders them deaf to the claims of misery, and indifferent to the welfare of their fellow men. Or if any share of regard be, in such minds, extended to others, it is only that narrow, circumscribed, and partly selfish regard, which is confined to their immediate kindred and connexions. And

even for the welfare of these they seldom consult on any enlarged or enlightened principles. Blinded by this sordid passion, the narrow-minded parent thinks nothing so important for his children's happiness as wealth. The invaluable blessings of knowledge and virtue, of a mind richly stored, and a heart trained to admire and love whatever is excellent, he is alike incapable and regardless of communicating. To amass wealth for his children, and to train them also to the same pursuit, are the sole objects of his parental solicitude. And what is the consequence? He transmits his wealth to hands incapable of rightly using it, and instead of being the blessing he intended, it only proves a source of jealousy and discord to his family, or serves perhaps to minister to the vices of a prodigal, who squanders, in a brief career of folly, the fruit of all the parent's years of patient toil and parsimony.

3. The passion for gain, when carried to yet greater excess, will not only render the mind thus insensible to objects of greater importance, but will even cause that very object to be lost sight of, for the sake of which it was originally desired. Men begin with loving

money only as the means of procuring the advantages and comforts of life. But it sometimes happens, that when, by long continuance, the pursuit of gain is become habitual, the end is lost sight of, and the means come to be regarded as the ultimate object of pursuit. Money is then sought and loved for itself alone. It is no longer applied to purchase the comforts and conveniences of life, or to contribute to the good of others, but accumulated only to swell a useless hoard which its owner fears to touch. The possessor of unbounded wealth subjects himself voluntarily to all the privations of actual poverty. Loath to diminish in the least degree his fondly-cherished store, he rigorously denies himself even the most innocent indulgence, and is content with what is barely sufficient to support a useless and miserable existence. Thus he continues to the end of life accumulating riches which he is incapable of applying to any rational use, till the unrelenting hand of death snatches him away from the idol of his base adoration, and consigns his hoarded treasure to his long-expectant, and now rejoicing heirs. Such is the character of the miser,—a character which, of all the forms under which the excessive love of gain presents itself, though not the

most pernicious to society, is certainly the most contemptible.

Though it is evident enough, that in these cases the pursuit of wealth is carried to a pernicious and culpable excess, yet it is not easy to draw with precision the limits within which it ought to be confined. Much eloquence has been employed by preachers and moralists, particularly by the moralists of antiquity, in decrying the pursuit of superfluous riches, and in extolling the wisdom of being content with a little: but this doctrine, however captivating in theory, has seldom been fully reduced to practice, and will be found, indeed, if fairly examined, incapable of standing the test of reason. No amount of wealth can be considered as superfluous to those who employ it in deeds of beneficence: and whilst we pursue it only by lawful means, and suffer not the desire of it to engross our minds to the exclusion of higher objects, I see not any other limits that need to be prescribed. Constant occupation is one of the most essential means of happiness; and those who retire in their declining years from the active business of life, satisfied with what they have acquired, and purposing to enjoy it, seldom

find that happiness in ease and freedom from care, which they before experienced in their days of labour.

CHAP. V.

DUTIES RELATING TO THE DESIRE AND PURSUIT OF REPUTATION.

The next class of moral prohibitions of which we shall treat, relates to those pursuits and dispositions which have for their object Praise, Honour, and Distinction. The love of reputation, or the desire of being in some way praised, admired, or honoured, is a passion of very extensive and powerful influence over the human breast. It is generated, as we have seen,* in earliest infancy, by our necessary dependance on the care and kindness of others. It grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength. In every period of life its power continues to be more and more confirmed by our frequent experience of the advantages which arise from the good opinion of others, and of the evil resulting from their animosity or censure. It is the strongest motive by which we are governed and directed in youth. It is the principle by which our conduct is perpetu-

* Book I. Chap. i. Sec. 13.

ally, though often secretly, influenced, in more advanced life. Who so bold as not to dread the general scorn or hatred of mankind? Who so more or less than human, as not to be gratified by the voice of praise? Various, indeed, are the ways in which this passion displays itself, and the subtle disguises, the manifold and often directly opposite forms which it assumes, are a subject of wide and intricate research to the observer of human nature. Some strive to obtain credit, by one recommendation from one class of men; others by another recommendation from a different class. Some are equally fearful of offending, and desirous of pleasing all; others seek to recommend themselves only to one particular class, and disregard or contemn the opinions of the rest of mankind. Some are satisfied, if they merely escape censure, or court praise only by means of gentleness, courtesy, and pliancy of disposition; others, of bolder stamp or more sanguine temperament, lay claim with confidence to the highest homage, and expect universal submission to their proud demand. Some openly solicit applause by a vain display of their real or fancied merits; others more covertly seek it even by affecting to be indifferent to it, or by disclaiming it

whenever offered. In all these various modes of behaviour, it is the same principle which operates, and the vain, the proud, the courteous, the diffident, the empty boaster, the affected pretender, are all actuated, in their several ways, by a regard to the opinion of their fellow men.

With respect to the limitations to be imposed on this passion, it is evident that they ought not to amount to an entire prohibition. The love of praise is not altogether to be condemned and eradicated as a vicious passion; it requires only to be restrained and directed, and if rightly restrained and directed, it will be found a most useful auxiliary to virtue. In a state like this in which we live, and designed, as we evidently are, for the enjoyment of that happiness which springs from mutual esteem, affection, and harmony, it is by no means to be desired that we should render ourselves completely indifferent to the good opinion of one another. Esteem is the natural and appropriate reward of virtue; and when it proceeds from the wise and good, and is obtained by qualities or actions which are really praiseworthy, it imparts a pleasure as pure, innocent,

and rational, as any we are capable of enjoying. The desire of esteem is, and must ever remain, one of the strongest bonds of human society. It is the chief source of all refinement, and the most powerful stimulus to every useful exertion. It is this which urges to those high attainments in art, science, and literature, by which society is so much benefited. It is this which softens our manners into gentleness, and disposes us to all the tender offices of kindness and compassion. To be destitute, on the other hand, of this desire, is a certain mark of a coarse and depraved state of mind; for a total indifference to the opinion of others, is never found but among the rudest or most abandoned of mankind. Though, however, the love of reputation is not to be totally eradicated, it evidently requires restraint and direction. For if we regard the applause of men as an object of supreme and exclusive desire; or if we seek it without discriminating between that which is worthless and that which is valuable; we shall be liable to fall into various errors, which I shall now endeavour to point out.

In order to take a complete and regular survey of the various forms under which the regard

for human opinion diplays itself, we may consider it as being diversified in two ways; first, according to the qualifications on the ground of which honour is sought; next, according to the manner in which the desire is manifested.

I. The regard for human opinion is diversified, in the first place, by the different qualifications which are considered as the subject of praise or distinction. The admiration of mankind for one another is attracted by various qualifications; by bodily, as well as by mental endowments; by accidental, as well as by acquired advantages. Of course it generally happens, that each individual seeks that kind of praise, to which he thinks he has the best pretensions; and according as circumstances determine, one man delights most in the homage which is paid to noble birth, or exalted rank; another in the respect obtained by wealth; a third in the admiration excited by talents or learning. Some endeavour to attract applause by beauty of person and elegance of dress; others by the splendour of their houses, the number of their retinue, and the magnificence of their style of living. The merchant glories in the thousands he has amassed; the clergyman aims to

shine by his eloquence or learning; the soldier aspires to fame by deeds of valour, and "seeks the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth." Qualities the most opposite may furnish food for the gratification of this passion; for while some value themselves for their fancied piety, and others seek, by ostentatious munificence, or by a parade of sensibility, to acquire the praise of benevolence; the rake among his dissolute companions glories in his exploits of gallantry or intemperance, and the thief among his comrades recounts with pride his feats of plunder or dexterity.

Respecting the pursuit of praise by vicious conduct among the vicious, no observations need here be offered, as that may be condemned by arguments of a more direct nature than the mere worthlessness of the praise thus sought. Of the other objects of this passion, it may be observed, that there is not one which justifies its unrestrained gratification. Some of them, as beauty of person, high birth, exalted rank, and splendour of appearance in dress or other externals, are circumstances so purely accidental, that itargues a want of sense to place one's merit in them, or to set any value on the admiration

they may excite. The man of sense, if he desires admiration, will desire it rather on the ground of qualities which are more properly his own, and will not consider it as any compliment to be admired merely for those external and accidental circumstances, by which the bad and the good, the foolish and the wise may be alike distinguished. Wherever such trifling qualifications appear to be regarded by their possessor as a ground of merit, it is not unfair to infer that he feels conscious of the want of any better title to distinction. This at least is an inference which mankind are generally disposed to draw, and whoever, therefore, evinces an anxiety to display such qualifications, never fails to incur contempt and ridicule, instead of admiration.

The endowments of the mind constitute a much juster ground of honour, because they are both more strictly personal, and add to the real importance of the individual by increasing his power of usefulness; and perhaps there is no homage at once so flattering and so just, as that which is paid to superior genius. To forbid all enjoyment of this gratification, where it is felt on good grounds, would be equally vain and

unreasonable. The man of exalted talents or profound learning, who has rendered his endowments subservient to the benefit of his fellow creatures, has a right to enjoy that dignity and honour which their gratitude and esteem confer upon him. To shew indeed an anxious desire or an arrogant expectation of this or any other kind of honour, will always give disgust: but not to be gratified by its voluntary bestowment, is not in human nature. Be it observed, however, that the conciousness of this desert is not in general felt in the greatest degree by those who are most entitled to feel it. The man of highest talents and most extensive acquirements is ever the most sensible of the deficiency of his knowledge and the limited reach of his capacity; and ever the most ready to confess, with the Grecian Sage, that all he knows is that he knows nothing. They only are vain of their acquirements who have penetrated merely into the confines of the vast regions of knowledge, and who imagine they have traversed the whole extent, only because the mists of ignorance limit their views, and conceal from them the boundless tracts which yet remain to be explored. Vanity or pride thus founded in ignorance can only excite the

ridicule or pity of those whose praise is truly valuable. But even in the case where pretensions of this kind are better founded, it is dangerous to make praise too much the object of pursuit, since it may lead to the perversion and misemployment of those talents, which duty requires to be devoted to purposes of usefulness. Applause being regarded as the primary object, talents will be made the means of popularity rather than of usefulness, and will be perverted to the unworthy purpose of flattering the passions, confirming the prejudices, and ministering to the corrupt tastes of men, rather than employed, as they should be, for their instruction and improvement. The talent of wit is peculiarly ensnaring, when the applause which it obtains is sought too eagerly. Instead of being confined to its proper office of enlivening conversation, and promoting on seasonable occasions an innocent cheerfulness, it sports with the feelings of others, excludes all serious and improving conversation, and scruples not to sacrifice truth for the sake of a livelier anecdote or a more pointed jest.

The ground of truest honour, undoubtedly, is moral worth; but this, by its very nature, is

incompatible with the pursuit of reputation as a primary object, and necessarily implies, as will be more fully shewn hereafter, a regard to a higher and better rule of conduct than the opinions of men. The man of truest virtue is always the least exalted in his own esteem, and the least solicitous about the applause of others; for he knows best his own defects; he is fully sensible how very far he falls short of the full extent of duty; he regulates his conduct by a higher standard than the vague and often mistaken opinions of men, and finding their praise and their censure alike in many cases undeserved, he is neither seduced by the one, nor deterred by the other, from what he knows to be the course of rectitude. Pretensions to superior virtue or piety may always be considered as a certain indication of the absence of those qualities, and as arguing either gross self-ignorance, or erroneous notions on the subject of religion. Of all the forms of pride, spiritual pride, as it is the most odious, is also the most unfounded, being merely the weakness of enthusiasts and fanatics, who, on the ground of their belief in certain mysterious dogmas, of their assiduous performance of exercises of devotion, or of the rapturous and visionary feelings

which their heated minds experience, imagine themselves the peculiar favourites of heaven.

II. The love of praise or honour is further diversified by the manner in which it operates; and this depends upon the boldness or timidity, the folly or discretion, the open or artful character, of those who feel its influence. Hence arise a great variety of characters, which, however widely differing in appearance, spring nevertheless from the same source,—the regard for human opinion.

1. In persons of weak and timid character, the effects of this principle are merely negative, and it appears only under the form of *the fear of censure and ridicule.* Hence that slavish and temporizing disposition, which is afraid to follow the dictates of conscience, whenever they are at variance with the customs, manners, or prejudices of the world. Hence the imbecility of those complying characters, who, having no firmness of purpose, no courage to persist in their own determinations, yield themselves entirely to the guidance of others. Hence the danger to which the young are more especially exposed, when they fall into the society of the

unprincipled; where, dreading the reproach of singularity, or the ridicule which virtuous scruples may excite, they are first deterred from expressing that disapprobation which they feel for what they hear or witness; and at length are led to join in all the evil practices to which they are urged or invited by their dissolute associates.

Opposed to this dangerous weakness is that temperate *firmness and independence of mind*, which, without rendering us regardless of the opinions of men, will enable us to despise the ridicule of fools and the censure which we know to be undeserved, and to adhere with steadiness to those principles which our deliberate judgment has approved. The importance of this quality will appear from considering the extreme folly of endeavouring to please all, and the inconsistent conduct to which that endeavour must lead. So various are the tastes, prejudices, and opinions of mankind, that there is no course we can possibly pursue, no character we can possibly assume, which will gain universal approbation. That course which gains us the applause of some, may subject us at the same time to the censure of others. If to avoid that censure, we

alter our conduct, we give offence to those who before commended us. If, then, from a desire to please all, we fluctuate in our conduct, and act according to circumstances, appearing in one character to one class of men, and in another character to a different class, instead of pleasing all, we shall assuredly be despised by all. For how can he be otherwise than contemptible, who thus hangs upon the judgment of others; who thus veers about with every breath of opinion, and whom the lightest sneer of ridicule, even from those whose sentiments are altogether unworthy of regard, will deter from doing what his conscience tells him to be right? Even with a view to no higher object than the esteem of men, it is wiser, upon the whole, to act a consistent part. For what character in the world is more generally honoured, than that of him, who, through evil and through good report, holds on, in the even path of duty, his steady course, undaunted by the frowns of malice, unmoved by the scoffs of ignorance or prejudice? There is something in such a conduct so manly and dignified, that, whatever present enmity it may excite among those to whose prejudices or interests it chances to be adverse; eventually, and from the world at large, it seldom fails to

extort the respect it merits. Let me not, however, be understood to recommend a total disregard in all circumstances to the censure of others. Whenever a man's conduct is the object of disapprobation, not to the ignorant and prejudiced merely, but to the wise and good, it surely becomes him to pause and reconsider; to listen to the advice or arguments, which may be offered to him; and to weigh well the principles and motives by which he is actuated. He may by this means find that he has been acting upon erroneous views, and it will then, of course, be his duty to alter his conduct accordingly. But if, after the fullest and fairest consideration of the subject, he still sees reason to persist in his own opinion, let no fear of the censure of others, however it may excite his concern, deter him from the course which conscience dictates. His judgment may be erroneous, but what he firmly believes to be his duty, that *is* a duty to him, and however the more enlightened may pity his error, they must and will applaud his conduct in adhering firmly to what he judges to be right.

2. Those who rise above the mere dread of censure and ridicule, and aspire to positive ho-

nour, may be divided into the *vain*, the *proud*, the *hypocritical*, and the *ambitious*.

(1.) The *vain* are they who are constantly seeking and soliciting praise by an ostentatious display of their real or fancied excellences. They lose no opportunity of bringing their merits to light, and think their good actions thrown away, unless made known and applauded. Persons of this character are seldom very scrupulous about the value of the praise they seek. Provided it be praise of some kind, they care little whether it proceed from the good or the bad, from the discerning or the ignorant;—whether it be obtained by qualities that are really estimable, or by such as please merely because they flatter the prejudices, or minister to the vices or corrupt tastes of others. Hence, by this insatiate thirst for admiration, they are often led, not only to plume themselves on the mere gifts of fortune or accident, on the graces of their persons, on the illustriousness of their birth, on the large amount of their possessions, or the splendour of their style of living, but to glory even in their vices among those to whom their vices will recommend them.

(2.) The *proud* are they who desire not, like the vain, *indiscriminate applause*, but the more flattering tribute of *respect*, *submission*, and an *acknowledgement of their superiority:* and this tribute they do not *court* by an assiduous display of their merits, but *claim* and *expect* it as a right which admits of no question, and needs no pains to establish. Thus though they appear, and wish to appear, indifferent to the world's opinion; though they stoop not, like the vain, to any direct or artful means of gaining admiration; they are equally desirous of the good opinion of others; for their happiness wholly depends on the acknowledgement of their claim, and is destroyed, if the tribute of respect or deference be withheld.

These two qualities, pride and vanity, are often, in consequence of the inaccurate use of terms, confounded; and indeed they agree in some respects; for both the proud and the vain entertain an undue opinion of their own deserts. Still, however, there is a wide and manifest distinction between them. They differ partly with respect to the *object* of desire; the vain man seeking *admiration*, or *expressed applause;* while the proud man requires only the

silent homage of respect. They differ also further in the *manner* in which their desires respectively *operate;* the vain man courting praise by open boasting, or arts of more concealed display; while the proud man only waits, in apparent unconcern, for the tribute he expects, and though he will warmly resent the refusal of it, he takes no pains to show the justice of his title. The vain man is generally a weak character, who cannot stand alone in the independence of his own esteem, but requires the approving testimony of others to support his self-complacence. He exposes himself to constant ridicule by his affected behaviour, his empty pretensions, and artifices the aim of which is manifest to all. Without the aid of much penetration, he is at once seen through and despised. But the proud man, though censurable, is the man of better sense and more respectable character. He does not obtrude his pretensions upon the notice of others. Though high in his own esteem, you do not discover it, till by some apparent slight or undesigned neglect, by showing accidentally a low opinion of him in that respect in which he values himself, you incur his high displeasure. It has been observed, and the remark is

just, that a man may be too proud to be vain; that is, he may entertain so strong and assured a conviction of his own merits or importance, as to think it altogether unnecessary to display them. Nay more, so far from displaying them, he may even take pleasure in appearing to lay aside and wave his claims. Persons, for instance, of very exalted rank, are generally far more affable and unassuming to their inferiors, than they whose elevation is recent or less exalted. Not that the former do not entertain quite as high an opinion of their own importance as the latter; but their claim, they know, is so indisputable, that they need not be at any pains about asserting it; especially as it is always more willingly acknowledged, when not obtruded into notice. On similar grounds it is that some persons of wealth or rank are negligent of their dress and personal appearance, conscious that they possess better claims to distinction than what are founded on these trifling circumstances, and secretly pleased perhaps with the contrast between their unpretending appearance and their real importance. Such are the subtle disguises which pride can occasionally assume.

But the way in which pride most frequently manifests itself is in rendering a man apt to take offence, warm and inexorable in his resentments, and tenacious of his will in cases of dissension.—The proud man is perpetually creating in his own imagination offences which were never really meant, or aggravating into fictitious enormity those which he actually suffers. Entertaining ideas of his own dignity or importance, which are far from corresponding with the sentiments of others respecting him, he necessarily experiences frequent disappointment in his expectations of homage, and thus subjects himself to continual provocations:*— more especially, if he openly assert by airs of haughtiness his arrogant pretensions; for then he wounds the pride of others, and exposes himself, not merely to imaginary injuries, but to many designed affronts, which that conflicting pride will be prompt to offer. As he thus lies peculiarly open to provocations, so he feels them with peculiar keenness, and resents them with extreme animosity. Every affront which is offered him, being measured according to the standard of his own imaginary importance, is viewed in colours of tenfold aggravation, and

* See Note Ee.

excites a degree of resentment, which nothing but the most ample reparation, or the most abject submission, will suffice to appease. An injury which wounds the pride is generally far more acutely felt than one which affects merely our property or personal security, by reason of the superior value and importance, which most men, but especially the proud, attach to reputation. Hence it is that affronts which imply in their authors a contemptuous opinion of the understanding, the veracity, or the courage of their objects, excite the keenest resentment, even in those who are not unduly elevated in their own opinion; because to resent such injuries seems necessary to wipe off a hated stigma, and to avert the thousand insults or marks of scorn, to which the reputation of cowardice, faithlessness, or imbecility, would expose them. No wonder, then, that the proud are, on these points, peculiarly jealous of their honour. No wonder that a sneer of scorn, or an imputation upon their courage or their veracity, should be regarded by them as a stigma which nothing but the blood of the offender can wash away. To this is owing the practice of duelling, so often lamented, but so difficult to be restrained;—a practice evidently

founded on that jealousy of honour, which constitutes the great characteristic of pride. Even in cases where little or no resentment is felt by the contending parties, and each would gladly avoid the encounter, if he could, the dread of incurring the stigma of cowardice too often deters from those first advances or small concessions, which would at once terminate the quarrel, and save the effusion of blood. In those more ordinary quarrels which come not to these extremities, the effects of pride are still manifest, in its prolonging contention, by rendering each party too tenacious of his fancied dignity, to make those advances or concessions which the other thinks himself entitled to expect. Each may perhaps feel himself to be partly in the wrong; but to acknowledge this, would be to afford matter of triumph to his adversary, and to descend from that lofty station of offended dignity, in which he wishes to appear to the world. Even to make the first advances towards reconciliation, without any acknowledgement of error, is commonly too hard a task for the proud; because, being resolved to avoid the very appearance of any admission of culpability in themselves, they obstinately insist upon it as the duty of their adversary to make

the first advances; and though they profess a willingness to be reconciled, when those advances are made, no consideration will ever move them to hold out first the hand of friendship unsolicited. Thus quarrels are often prolonged upon a point of honour, where perhaps no other obstacle remains to the most amicable adjustment.

Such are the general features of vanity and pride, which I have thus treated of in connexion, because they are best understood by being compared with one another. There are some varieties, however, of these two qualities, which yet demand our attention, before we proceed to other topics.

Conceit is a quality respecting which it is difficult to determine whether it belong more properly to vanity or to pride. It implies a high valuation of self on account of some real or supposed excellence; it implies also the *display* of this opinion. It differs however from vanity in the degree of *confidence* which it supposes in the feeling of self-complacence, which confidence in the conceited man is such, as to render him regardless, in some measure, of the

applause of others. It differs from pride, in that the object of its expectations is *admiration*, rather than *respect*. The term conceit is commonly applied in cases where the high opinion entertained of self is most destitute of foundation. Thus the sciolist, who knows but the mere rudiments of science, and yet fancies that he is profoundly learned, is properly stigmatized with the epithet conceited. The most general meaning, indeed, of the term *conceit* is that of groundless fancy, or the conception of something not really existing. Hence it is applied with peculiar propriety to that fond satisfaction with self, which has little or no real merit to justify it.*

Haughtiness is that particular kind of pride which plainly manifests itself in the outward demeanour. Respect, submission, deference, and these in the highest possible degree, are the tribute which the haughty man peculiarly claims; but the most distinguishing feature of his character is, that he asserts his claims too

* "A man is said to be *proud* of that which he really has, but to be *conceited* of that which he really has not: a man may be *proud* to an excess of merits which he actually possesses; but when he is *conceited*, his merits are all in his own *conceit;* the latter is therefore obviously founded on falsehood altogether." Crabb's Synonymes.

openly by supercilious airs, and marked disdain, towards all to whom he thinks himself superior. It is accordingly a mode of behaviour offensive in the highest degree to others, and which never fails to render him who adopts it the object of general and bitter animosity.

Arrogance is nearly identical with Haughtiness. It is a term, however, of more extensive import, being applied to bold pretensions of any kind, unsuited to the qualifications actually possessed. Thus he is arrogant, who claims a greater degree of respect than his condition or character entitles him to; who sets himself upon a level with those who are indisputably his superiors; who thrusts himself forward into situations for which he is totally incompetent, or attempts undertakings which are altogether beyond the reach of his abilities. In some of its applications the term arrogance has nearly the same import as assurance, which latter term, however, denotes a species of self-estimation that demands a distinct description.

The man of *Assurance* is he, who, entertaining a high conceit of himself, reckons with perfect confidence upon finding a corresponding

opinion in others. He has no doubt whatever of being welcome in any company where he chooses to intrude himself. He has no hesitation in speaking his sentiments upon any subject, how slight soever may be his information concerning it, and often engrosses conversation where others have a far better title to be heard. He is fond of talking of himself, and vaunts without blushing of his own endowments or exploits. He assumes airs of ease and familiarity even with his superiors, and prates with the most perfect self-satisfaction in the presence of those whose knowledge and talents might be expected to impose a respectful silence. Not doubting, in short, that he is as much the object of attention and admiration to others, as he is to himself, he never scruples to push himself forward on every occasion into notice. No place restrains, no numbers abash him; and even the plainest indications of that dislike and contempt which he never fails to excite, cannot always suffice to put him down.

Contempt may be considered as a certain expression of pride. The same temper of mind which inspires a man with a high opinion of himself, will naturally dispose him to entertain

a mean opinion of others; and the expression of the latter feeling will often be chosen as the means of indirectly gratifying the former. When contempt is excited by instances of peculiar meanness of conduct, it is generally considered as a laudable feeling, indicating an acuteness of moral sensibility. But the proper feeling with which vice, of whatever kind, should be regarded, is compassion; and compassion will dictate a far different behaviour from that which is prompted by contempt. Compassion will manifest itself by mild expostulation or gentle rebuke; contempt, by sarcastic sneers and provoking taunts. The one aims at the correction of the fault which excites it; the other has no object but to humble and mortify the offender, by showing the mean opinion with which he is regarded. Contempt, in short, is a feeling of triumph, in which the consideration of our own superiority is the predominant idea. It partakes, therefore, of the nature of pride, even when it appears to be entertained on the most justifiable grounds. And when it is excited by inferiority in merely accidental circumstances, such as birth, wealth, or station, it is more obviously the result of pride, and of a species of pride the most absurd of any.

The virtues opposed to vanity and pride under all their several forms, are *Modesty* and *Humility*, which, though they may be in some measure understood from what has been already said, require, in order to be fully appreciated, a more distinct consideration.

The *modest* man is he who makes no vain display, no empty vaunts, no impudent pretensions, but leaves his own deserts to speak for themselves. He never thrusts himself forward out of his proper place, nor reckons with undue confidence upon the approbation or attention of others; on the contrary, he is loath to make himself an object of attention, or to be the hero of his own tale. He never intrudes himself where he is not welcome; never engrosses conversation where others have an equal claim to be listened to; and never speaks his sentiments except where he is qualified to judge, nor speaks them even then but as the sentiments of one who may be mistaken, and who, if mistaken, is desirous of being better informed. His thoughts and attention, in a word, are not centred in himself; he has consideration for others as well as for himself, and desires no higher place and no greater share in

their attention or regard, than he knows their own self-love will dispose them to allow. By such behaviour he not only escapes the perpetual mortifications which vanity never fails to meet with, but, by imposing no tax upon the attention of others, and never interfering with their own self-esteem, disposes all to regard him with favour; and those who would take a malicious pleasure in exposing the artifices and putting down the pretensions of the vain, will gladly render full, though it may be tardy, justice to the merits of him, who courted not their observation, but seemed satisfied with *being*, and careless of *appearing* estimable. This virtue we must be careful not to confound with that false modesty or excessive diffidence, which is known by the name of *Bashfulness*. The latter is a weakness, resulting either from a timid disposition, which renders a person backward to encounter the gaze of numbers, and fearful of exposing himself to ridicule by any impropriety of behaviour; or from ignorance of the world, which sometimes produces the same effect in men who would not shrink from the most appalling form of real danger. Widely as this quality appears to differ from vanity, it will be found, on a nearer examina-

tion, to partake of something in common with it, and to be only another form of the same general regard for the opinion of others. The bashful man imagines he is more an object of observation than he really is. He thinks too much of the appearance he will make, and of the opinions and remarks which may be formed or expressed concerning him. Whereas true modesty consists in having no thought at all of these things, the attention being unaffectedly engaged on other subjects.

The virtue of *Humility*, though opposed to *pride*, by no means consists, as some have imagined, in *underrating* our own worth. That is not humility, but abjectness, and the morbid effect of a melancholy or superstitious temper. It can never surely be our duty to entertain on any subject a false opinion, and to be really and unfeignedly ignorant of good qualities which we actually possess, would be an imperfection rather than a virtue, as it would imply an ignorance of our own character in general, and a blindness to our faults as well as to our virtues. It is not uncommon, indeed, to hear persons disavowing all merit, professing to regard their own qualifications or acquirements

as utterly unworthy of notice, and speaking of themselves continually in terms of disparagement. But this behaviour, though apparently so different from that vanity which vaunts its merits, proceeds not unfrequently from the same source. It is nothing better, in general, than the mere *affectation of humility;* a mere artifice to gain applause by means of the comparison which they secretly hope will be made between their low pretensions and their real deserts.* To entertain just that opinion of ourselves which is correct, and neither a higher nor a lower opinion, is all that the duty of true humility requires. This alone will be sufficient to restrain from all assuming or arrogant behaviour: for the man who sees himself in the light of truth, sees himself as but an insignificant member of a vast community. Sensible that he is placed among a race of beings, of whom each regards his own happiness as the most important of all objects, is occupied chiefly with his own concerns, and disposed to think of and value himself far more than others, he sees how vain is the expectation of gaining from such beings that share of notice, homage, or respect, which self-love would call its due, and forbears,

* Note Ff.

therefore, to entertain expectations so inconsistent with what he knows to be the character of man. He discerns, moreover, in himself so many real imperfections; he is sensible that he falls in many respects so very far short of what he ought to be, that he cannot be much elated in his own esteem by any comparison which he may draw between himself and others. For while he perceives that he is, in some respects, superior to others, he sees also that, in other respects, they are superior to him. He finds in the majority of mankind, as in himself, a character compounded of good and evil qualities, and observing in how many cases he is unable to determine the different degrees of merit among different men, he reasonably presumes that there is the same difficulty in the minds of others with respect to himself, and is therefore justly diffident of his own apparent superiority, and cautious of drawing comparisons too rashly in his own favour. True humility, in short, is only a certain form of justice or benevolence, and consists in judging so impartially of ourselves and so fairly of others, as not to overlook their merits, from a selfish, exclusive attention to our own. No quality, therefore, can be more remote than humility

from littleness of mind, and no idea can be more unfounded than that which attaches dignity to the character of the proud. Pride, disguise it as we will, is a thoroughly selfish feeling, and selfishness, whatever form it may assume, evinces a little mind. To be free from the unworthy bias of self-partiality; and disposed to appreciate justly another's worth;—this is the proper part of a truly noble mind, and this is no other than the virtue of humility. But the worth of this quality will be best illustrated by contrasting its effects with those of pride; and as pride has been shown to be a passion of highly quarrelsome and vindictive tendency, humility recommends itself to our esteem as an eminently *pacific* virtue. Take away from every member of society the wish to enhance his own importance, and you remove the most abundant source of jealousy, hatred, and dissension among men. Let all withdraw from the eager contest for preeminence; let all be ready to do full justice to each other's worth; and how seldom could strife arise; how easily, should it chance to arise, would peace be restored! Prompt to take offence, and painfully alive to every appearance of neglect or slight; provoking affronts by his arrogant pretensions,

and then burning with implacable resentment against the offender, the proud man can find but little respite from the annoyances of dissension and the torment of vindictive passions. But how widely different is the condition of him who is actuated by the benignant spirit of humility! Conciliating the favour of others by his unassuming behaviour, he is by this means secured in a great measure from wilful and real affronts; and as the pride of others finds no conflicting pride in him, their airs of consequence are to him no subject of imaginary grievance. He is, therefore, far less liable to provocation than the proud: but provocation, should he receive it, cannot so deeply disturb his peace, because it cannot excite in him any inordinate or implacable resentment. Entertaining no extravagant notions of his own dignity or importance, he does not surcharge the wrongs he suffers, with ideal aggravation; and being habitually disposed to do full justice to the characters of others, and to form an impartial estimate of his own, he is at all times willing to make every reasonable allowance in favour of an adversary, or candidly to acknowledge whatever may have been wrong in his own behaviour. How, then, can such a breast

be tortured by vindictive passions; or how can discord and contention dwell where such a spirit reigns!

While humility thus serves to secure us from animosity and dissension, it qualifies us also for the enjoyment and advantages of friendship, by disposing us to receive advice, instruction, or friendly reproof, with due attention. The proud man is so self-sufficient in his own estimation, that he disdains to listen to instruction or advice, from whatever quarter it may come; and reproof, however just, or however gently and kindly administered, is sure to rouse his high resentment, or to provoke him to an obstinate persistance in error. Thus he loses the best advantages of friendship; for he either deters his real friends from giving him wholesome, but unpalatable counsel, or if they venture to do so, forsakes them in displeasure for the society of those who are willing to humour and encourage his self-complacence. The humble man, on the contrary, is at all times open to conviction and accessible to admonition. He is glad to profit by another's wisdom. He is grateful to those true friends who kindly warn him of his errors. He weighs their admonitions

with candour and fairness, unbiassed by any undue anxiety to vindicate himself, and whenever convinced of being in the wrong, he frankly and honestly acknowledges the conviction, and hastens to repair his fault. Nor is he angry or indignant, even though he be the object of mistaken and undeserved censure, but with mildness and good temper justifies his conduct, and allows, if he can, to those who blame him, the credit of meaning well. Thus he is enabled to derive from friendship its most precious fruits, and falls not the blind and unpitied victim of his own mistaken courses for want of a friendly monitor to warn him of his danger.

(3.) When the desire of esteem or praise employs *deceit* as a means of procuring its gratification, it leads to guilt of a darker complexion than that of mere vanity or pride. But inordinate vanity is seldom altogether free from guilt of this description; for it is seldom satisfied with that small measure of praise to which its real merits are entitled. The vain are, therefore, prone to exaggerate their achievements, to boast of what they have never done, to assume a character not their own, and to counterfeit virtuous feelings to which their

hearts are strangers. This constitutes the vice of *Affectation*, which, though it sometimes arises merely from mistaken vanity, not knowing its own *fort*, and seeking to shine by means unsuited to the proper character and station of the individual, is generally chargeable in some degree with the darker guilt of dissimulation or hypocrisy. Affectation is a species of *petty hypocrisy*, which consists in a person's seeking a little temporary admiration or consequence by counterfeiting some quality, or adopting some peculiarity of manner, which he supposes will become himself, because it has appeared becoming in others. Thus, when one in humble life desires to have it believed that he is intimately acquainted with the great, and, for this purpose, talks of them in familiar terms, adopts their manners, repeats their sayings, and pretends to an accurate knowledge of their affairs;—when a man of plain understanding attempts to shine as a wit, by means of strained and far-fetched conceits, or second-hand jests produced as his own;—when some peculiar habit or mode of behaviour, it may be some fault or weakness, observed in a man of distinguished eminence, is aped by those who are incapable of resembling him in his superior

qualities; or when the tones and language of lively sensibility are assumed for the purpose of appearing to others in an amiable and interesting light; the vanity displayed in these and similar instances, attempting, as it does, to counterfeit and impose, but without the dark designs and more profound dissimulation of the hypocrite, is distinguished both from simple vanity, and also from hypocrisy, by the name of Affectation.* The attempt, however, it is almost needless to observe, is scarcely ever successful. The awkwardness of the assumed behaviour, the incongruity of the borrowed character, betrays to the least penetrating eye the vanity from which it springs, and the fond actor of this studied part, instead of gaining the admiration which he seeks, becomes deservedly the laughing-stock of all observers.

When dissimulation of a deeper kind is practised for the sake of reputation, and the real character is totally concealed by a specious semblance of sanctity and virtue, Affectation would be far too mild a term to designate a guilt, which then we brand with the more odious name of *Hypocrisy*. The hypocrite is

* See the Rambler, No. 20.

he who cares not at all for the reality of virtue, provided only he can put on the appearance. He is not himself deluded, like the vain man, with a fond imagination of his own excellence; but deliberately forms a plan to impose upon the world by the studied performance of a part altogether unlike his real character. This conduct, however, it should be observed, arises not always from the love of applause. More frequently, perhaps, its ultimate object is lucre, or power, or some other sinister end, for accomplishing which a certain character or reputation is thought necessary. But whatever be his object, the reputation of the hypocrite is a bubble which every breath of air may break. The utmost skill and most unremitted vigilance, though they may for a time be successful, cannot long suffice to carry on the imposture. In some unguarded moment an inconsistency will betray him. From some unexpected quarter the truth will come to light. Then the whisper will rapidly spread. Curiosity and malice will catch it with equal gladness and divulge it with equal zeal; and the character which was presented to the world so studiously arrayed in the fairest garb of sanctity, will now be exposed in all its naked deformity to the scorn and de-

testation of mankind. This representation of the guilt and folly of hypocrisy assumes the worst extreme, of which, it is to be hoped, there are few examples to be found in real life. But every day's experience exhibits instances of something approaching to this; for few men are willing to appear to the world exactly in their real characters, and it is no uncommon thing to hear persons taking credit to themselves for the purest and most exalted motives, when it is evident to a penetrating observer, that views of interest, or a regard to reputation, the love of power, or party spirit, are the real springs which secretly actuate their conduct. Among the contributors to public schemes of charity, how many are there, who add their names from mere ostentation, or the fear of appearing singular or penurious, who yet will not scruple to assume the credit of disinterested philanthropy! How often has ambition concealed its designs beneath the specious guise of patriotism! How often have the interested supporters of an established and profitable religion talked loudly of their ardent zeal in the cause of truth and virtue! It is but fair, however, to observe of those who act in this manner, that many, perhaps most of them, instead

of meaning to deceive, may possibly be themselves mistaken as to the motives which influence their conduct. For such is the subtlety of the human heart, that we are often unaware of the real nature of our motives, and that which appears hypocrisy, is sometimes the less culpable effect of self-ignorance, or the want of candour.

(4.) The principle of action now under consideration assumes in some the form which I have denominated *Ambition.* The term is in some degree exceptionable, because it includes the love of *power*, as well as the love of *glory.* But I employ it here in the latter sense exclusively. Ambition differs from vanity in aiming at a more extensive and lasting species of applause. The vain man aims at nothing more than a little temporary admiration, by the display of any qualification, whether of mind, or body, or external circumstances, which he thinks likely to excite it. To sparkle occasionally by his wit at the festive table ; to draw a momentary attention by the display of his accomplishments or the narrative of his exploits, or even to attract, by the elegance of his dress or the splendour of his equipage, the fugitive

gaze of the passing multitude,—is enough to satisfy his utmost wishes. But the ambitious man aspires to a higher and a more lasting fame. He seeks to draw the attention of the world, and to acquire a renown which shall outlive himself, and transmit his name with honour to remote posterity. The mode in which he pursues this object, is determined by the nature of his talents and circumstances. If his lot be cast in public life, he aspires to rise to the highest attainable station of rank and authority; to shine as the ornament of the senate; to be distinguished as the champion of the people; or to make the world resound with the fame of his military achievements. If his humble fortune forbid such hopes, he aspires to be preeminent in that narrower sphere to which he is confined; to be the most distinguished of his class; the most celebrated of his profession; or illustrious in the world of letters by the productions of his genius. It is a matter of great difficulty to determine how far this ambition is consistent with duty. It has prompted to so many deeds of heroism and usefulness; it has produced so many illustrious patriots and statesmen, whose labours have essentially benefited their country; so many

philosophers, historians, and poets, whose works have charmed or instructed mankind, that it cannot, when thus directed and employed, appear in any degree deserving of censure. It were better, certainly, if men could be induced to make the same exertions from pure benevolence. But human motives are seldom without some tinge of selfishness, and the desire of *honest* fame is so nearly allied to virtue, and so generally beneficial in its influence, that we cannot reasonably refuse it some measure of approbation. The point is, to ensure the restriction of the desire within such limits, that it may always breathe the prayer for *honest* fame or *none ;** and this, it is evident, can only be accomplished by allying it with moral and religious principle. Ambition unrestrained by principle, has proved one of the worst sources of moral corruption, and one of the most grievous scourges of mankind. On the theatre of public life, it has agitated states with the disorders of faction, and led the conqueror on in his career of blood. It has caused many whose talents might have rendered them instruments

* "Unblemished let me live, or die unknown :
O grant an honest fame, or grant me none."
Pope's Temple of Fame.

of incalculable good,to prostitute those talents to the acquisition of temporary fame, by supporting the errors, or ministering to the passions of the multitude. Nor is it less pregnant with disappointment to its votaries than with mischief to society: for what is that prize for which the ambitious pant, and for the sake of which they endure so many toils and make such costly sacrifices?—An empty and delusive phantom which fades away at their approach;—a distinction dearly purchased at the expense of peace and innocence;—a happiness dependant on the breath of the fickle multitude, whose admiration may be changed, they know not how soon, nor for what slight causes, into hatred;—or, at the best, an exaltation which only exposes them the more to the storms of misfortune, and renders them a more conspicuous mark for the shafts of envious calumny.

The desire of reputation as a primary object, even though it do not seek its gratification by any improper means, will prove a fertile source of disappointment and vexation, if it be not duly moderated and repressed. For this purpose let us consider how many obstacles may interpose to frustrate this desire. Whatever

our real merits may be, how often, from a variety of causes, shall we have the mortification to find that they are not known and appreciated as we are conscious they deserve! Heedlessness will overlook them; envy will undervalue them; malice will, if possible, distort them into faults. Others occupied with their own pursuits, and engrossed, it may be, in the contemplation of their own excellences, have neither leisure nor inclination to remark in us the merits which to ourselves appear so manifest. And often when they do bestow attention on our characters, it is more for the purpose of finding out defects, than of noting and praising our good qualities. How often, moreover, does the opinion of the world do gross injustice to our reputation! In how many instances are our actions misrepresented, and our intentions misunderstood! How frequently does censoriousness magnify our pardonable failings, or calumny blacken our name with false aspersions! To him, therefore, whose happiness consists wholly in fame, occasions of disappointment and chagrin must perpetually occur. The lightest shafts of ridicule or sarcasm will wound him to the very quick, and his peace of mind will be the constant sport of every idle disparaging remark, which

may chance to reach his ears. It is plainly, then, the part of wisdom, to be careful that our happiness be not too much dependant on the opinion of others. That we should render ourselves altogether regardless of that opinion, is by no means to be desired; but to throw off all slavish subjection to it, and to have some higher and better principle by which to regulate our conduct, is necessary for our security both from disquietude and from error. For the man who acts exclusively and solely from a regard to reputation, has no sufficient motive to withhold him from secret iniquities, which he is sure may be indulged in without the danger of detection. He has no motive to do more than merely conform to the rules of virtue in his outward and visible behaviour; and provided he can succeed in putting on a decent exterior before the world, no matter to him what conduct he follows when placed beyond the reach of human observation, or how much his thoughts run riot within the secrecy of his own breast. He only can be expected uniformly and steadily to pursue the course of virtue, who has learnt to set a value on his own esteem, who is content with the approving testimony of his own conscience, and who seeks, in pre-

ference to the applause of men, the applause of that Great Being to whom the secrets of all hearts are known. He who acts on these high principles, is as fearful of transgressing under the veil of privacy, as in the public view and in the glare of day. He abhors the thought of committing an act of baseness, though thickest shades of darkness should shroud it from all human knowledge. He desires to render the very thoughts and feelings of his inmost breast conformable to the rules of duty, not less than his words and actions before the world. Thus aspiring to the approbation of God and his own conscience, he possesses a motive to virtue of uniform and constant, as well as powerful influence, and is elevated equally above the censure and the applause of men.—It is necessary, however, that this independant regard to the dictates of conscience should be accompanied by an *enlightened conscience*, otherwise it will only lead us to persist in error. For want of this, men have been found, who have imagined they were serving the cause of God, and fulfilling their duty, by exercising the bloodiest cruelties of persecution upon those whose faith they deemed erroneous.

3. Having now fully considered the more obvious and direct effects of the passion for honour or distinction, we proceed to a class of errors which flow from the same source, though in a more indirect and hidden manner. It may seem, at first view, difficult to understand, how any one can be tempted by the influence of this passion to injure another's reputation; for

> "he who filches from me my good name,
> Robs me of that which *not enriches him*,
> And makes me poor indeed."

Certain, however, it is, that Censoriousness, Detraction, and Envy are vices which often result from the thirst of applause; and a little reflection will suffice to show in what manner the effect takes place.

Censoriousness consists in a proneness to find fault with others, to put the worst construction upon their actions, to allow of no excuse for their misconduct, and to lend a willing ear and give ready credence to whatever is reported to their disadvantage. This conduct appears to proceed partly from a secret desire to display that sagacity and discernment which seem to be evinced by the ability to detect another's foibles; partly from the idea of gaining a kind

of negative credit by means of the inference, which it seems natural to draw, that he who censures, cannot be himself chargeable with the failings which are the objects of his censure. The very act of censuring seems to indicate a superiority both of understanding and of virtue, and it is the display of this imagined superiority which constitutes the chief gratification of the censorious. Something, indeed, must be ascribed to that more innocent propensity, which makes the follies and errors of others a mere matter of empty curiosity, and a convenient topic of idle talk. But this does not serve to explain why more pleasure should be felt in the discovery of faults, than in the discovery of virtues. The only reason for this preference is, that the failings of their neighbours appear to the censorious as giving to themselves a kind of negative repute, which is enough to afford them matter of triumph. By lowering others in the scale of merit, they seem to raise themselves. By throwing others into the shade, they give comparative splendour to their own characters. It is not, therefore, as they would fain persuade themselves, it is not from a pure love of virtue and a cordial abhorrence of vice, that they are so ready to remark the faults of

others; but because to censure flatters their self-importance, and exalts them in their own esteem.

The virtue opposite to this conduct is *Charity*, which consists in being backward to believe any thing to another's discredit, and in admitting for his known misconduct every reasonable palliation or excuse. This duty by no means requires that we should be blind to the faults of others; that we should decline to exercise our judgment upon their characters, or regard their misconduct without any feeling of censure. So long, indeed, as we possess that share of understanding which enables us to distinguish between right and wrong, we cannot avoid forming an opinion respecting the conduct of our fellow men. And were it possible it would not be desirable; for how could we in that case derive instruction from our observation of human life? How could we profit by the example of the good, or take warning from the punishment of evil-doers? Or how exercise that prudent discrimination in the choice of our associates, which is so obviously necessary for the security of our virtue? The duty of charity forbids not a fair judgment of the

character and conduct of others, but only that rashness and severity of judgment which characterize the censorious. It requires not that we should be insensible to what is wrong in others; but only that we should exercise the same fairness and indulgence towards them, which we desire to have exercised towards ourselves; that we should be backward to give credit to evil reports concerning them; that we should be willing to admit every excuse or extenuation which their case will reasonably bear; and that we should be more pleased to notice their good qualities, than to censure their faults. This conduct may be recommended both as being reasonable and just in itself, and also on account of its beneficial tendency to the individual and to society. Knowing, as we do, how little dependance can be placed on common rumour; how oft it happens that the most blameless conduct is mistaken or misrepresented by the world; and how liable the most spotless character is to be tarnished by the malignant breath of calumny; it is nothing more than what is fair and reasonable, to refuse implicit credence to unfavourable reports, while any room is left for doubt, and scrupulously to abstain from giving them further circulation without the ful-

lest assurance of their truth. Nor should we hastily condemn, even when we actually witness in another any instance of apparent guilt; as it is possible that the conduct which bears at first view an unfavourable appearance, may prove, when all its motives or circumstances shall be known, entirely innocent, or even meritorious. But supposing that we have the fullest assurance of another's guilt, and that no room whatever is left for doubt or suspension of judgment, still there may be palliating circumstances which it is but justice to consider, or reasons which should withhold us from divulging the unfavourable truth. May not the offender have erred through ignorance, or been misled by evil example? May not inexperience be his only fault, and good instruction or advice the only requisite to render him sensible of his error, and anxious to repair it? If such pleas cannot be urged, let us transfer ourselves in idea into the situation of the offender, and consider the peculiar circumstances in which he is placed, and the peculiar temptations to which he is exposed; and we may possibly find that his misconduct has arisen from habits or prejudices, which, upon the whole, we cannot wonder that one in his situation should have

contracted, and which, we may perhaps be compelled to allow, the same circumstances would in all probability have created in ourselves. Such considerations, without lessening in the least degree our abhorrence of guilt, may reasonably soften and moderate our reprehension of the guilty ; for the strongest moral disapprobation of the one is perfectly compatible with the existence of the most charitable sentiments towards the other ; and the censorious who inveigh with such unsparing severity against the misconduct of others, are widely mistaken in imagining that they are actuated only by an honest indignation against vice. He who is most acutely sensible of moral feelings, regards offenders with pity rather than with censure, because he views them, not as being actuated by a perverse love of evil for its own sake, but as subject to a lamentable delusion of mind, which renders them blind to the dangerous tendency of their conduct. "They know not what they do," is the charitable plea, which he is willing to urge in behalf of the worst offenders. Much as he may disapprove their conduct, he does not consider them as forfeiting all claim to his benevolence. Seeing them ignorantly pursuing a course which will certainly

terminate in ruin; enslaved to evil habits which time has rendered scarcely conquerable, or misled by illusions of passion or prejudice which falsify the dictates of their reason; he does not presume to condemn them with unqualified severity, but leaves them in pity to the sentence of a wiser Judge, and to that salutary discipline which he will inflict for their amendment. Whatever, moreover, may be the vices which we witness, and however little they may admit of excuse, it is surely neither kind nor reasonable to allow those vices so to engross our view, as to hide the virtues with which they may be found in company. The human character is invariably mixed of good and evil, and to be blind to the one, and keen only in detecting the other, is conduct which can evidently proceed from no other than a malignant motive.

To these arguments, which tend to show the reasonableness and equity of the virtue of charity, may be added the consideration of its efficacy in obviating dissension. To judge harshly of another's conduct or character, is the most certain way of rousing his keenest resentment, because it wounds that secret pride, which is at once the most prevailing and the

most irritable of human feelings. Accordingly it will be found, that the melancholy feuds which so often interrupt the harmony of families and acquaintances, are by no cause so much fomented and prolonged, as by the spirit of censoriousness. When an opposition of opinion or inclination has once arisen between persons of this disposition, it is generally the source of implacable animosity; for each judging uncharitably of the other's motives, the wrong which each feels done to his honour, will kindle a new and far more lively resentment than could ever have arisen from the original dispute; and the quarrel will thus be aggravated and prolonged beyond the hope of reconcilement. Hence it is that no man has so many or such inveterate foes as he who indulges a censorious temper. Let him look well to his own conduct; for if, in some unguarded moment, he should chance himself to err, no mercy can he expect to find. All who have felt, or only feared, the stings of his sarcasm, will join in the cry of bitter invective, and none will spare.—"Judge not," said Jesus, "that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." It is an admonition

peculiarly well calculated to restrain us from all harsh judgment of one another. For who, that is duly sensible of his own failings, and perceives how much he would have to fear from an *equitable*, still more from a *severe* scrutiny of his life and actions, can possibly refuse to others the indulgence which conscience tells him he needs so much himself?

Another indirect effect of the desire of honour, when not duly regulated, is *Envy;* a passion which often, indeed, appears under the form of censoriousness, but which possesses nevertheless a character sufficiently distinct to entitle it to a separate discussion. Envy is that malignant feeling with which we are apt to regard those who eclipse us in the estimation of the world, and deprive us by their superior merit of that share of notice which we think we should otherwise attract. The term, indeed, in its most extensive sense, is applicable to that feeling with which the more successful competitor in *any* pursuit is regarded by those whom he has outstripped; and superior *riches*, or superior *power*, or superior *advantages of any kind*, may be the subject of envy, as well as superior *honour*. But as it is most frequently and

powerfully excited by the strife for distinction, from the more exclusive nature of that superiority, it may be properly treated of in this connexion. It is obvious to remark that envy is not apt to be excited by superior distinction of every kind. It is only when surpassed in those qualifications by means of which we hope to be ourselves distinguished, that we are liable to this malignant passion. Whoever excludes us from that notice and honour to which we think ourselves entitled; whoever engrosses that attention of which we are ourselves desirous, and thus obstructs, though undesignedly, our own ambition, appears in the light of one who injures us, and is therefore regarded with somewhat of the same animosity which an injury excites. But the peculiar character of this animosity is, that, having no justifiable or ostensible grounds, it must be buried in the secrecy of the breast, or vent itself only by acts of indirect and concealed hostility. The malignant feelings of anger and revenge, much as they disquiet the breast, are far less tormenting than envy, because they find relief in outward demonstrations, which are indulged in with little or no restraint. They prompt, and seem to justify, immediate measures of punishment or retaliation,

or expend their virulence in complaints or invectives with which others may sympathize. But envy, having no injury to revenge or complain of, and being a feeling which none can pity or excuse, is ashamed to betray itself to the observation of others. It corrodes, therefore, in secret, the heart in which it dwells, or only vents its spleen in base endeavours to depreciate the superior merit which provokes it. No arguments but what are implied in the foregoing description, seem necessary to dissuade from the indulgence of this disposition. When once, indeed, it has gained an ascendant, arguments can seldom avail to subdue it, and the only effectual preservative against it consists in that general moderation of the desire of distinction which will preclude the occasions that give it birth. Wherever the desire of admiration exists in any undue degree, it will unavoidably prove the frequent source of envy; more especially if it amounts to that inordinate and engrossing vanity which eagerly grasps at every species of applause without distinction. "They," observes Lord Bacon, "that desire to excel in too many matters, out of levity and vain glory, are ever envious, for they cannot want work; it being impossible but

many, in some one of those things, should surpass them; which was the character of Adrian, the emperor, who mortally envied poets, and painters, and artificers, in works wherein he had a vein to excel."* The torments to which such a mind is subject, are as little to be wondered at, as pitied; and the example affords a striking and impressive lesson against the indulgence of that thirst of admiration, which may prove, in its excesses, so abundant a source of vexation.

Envy is carefully to be distinguished from that more generous spirit of rivalry which is called *Emulation.* The former is *subsequent* to another's success, or arises only when his superior merit is made manifest; the latter is *antecedent* to all decision upon the subject, and can only exist while yet the question of comparative merit is undetermined. The former is a passive feeling of malignity, which only disquiets the breast wherein it dwells, or, if it prompts to action, prompts only to the base attempt to disparage the merit which it cannot reach; while the latter is a powerful principle of action, which implies no feeling but an ardent desire to excel, and incites to the most vigorous

* Lord Bacon's Essays. Essay IX.

exertions for that purpose. Emulation, therefore, is always a spur to industry and a means of improvement; while envy is only a source of torment, or a motive to detraction. It must be allowed, indeed, that emulation not unfrequently leads to envy; for it is scarcely possible for one who has earnestly endeavoured to surpass his competitors for distinction, not to feel mortified in some degree on finding his efforts unavailing. Yet there may be a generous emulation, which, while it animates to vigorous efforts for pre-eminence, is capable of acknowledging without reluctance or spleen the superior merit of a more successful competitor. At any rate, it is not in the case of active competition, that envy is most apt to arise. On the contrary it is far more frequently felt, and felt in its worst degree, by those who have made the smallest efforts to excel, or in cases where such efforts are excluded by the nature of the distinction sought. After a fair competition in a pursuit where only real merit can attain success, the mind is often less disposed to envy than before; because the merit which is by that means manifested, is more indisputable, and the unsuccessful competitor, by the very effect of the contest, is better enabled to appreciate and

disposed to admire it.* After all, however, it must be admitted, that emulation is a feeling which requires to be watched with the utmost caution, so imminent is the danger of its degenerating to a worse sentiment. And it may be questioned whether it be judicious to employ it, to the extent in which it often is employed, as a spur to industry in the young. Motives of emulation may be sometimes useful to rouse the indolent and unambitious, and to animate them to exertions which they could not otherwise be induced to make; but it is surely better to inspire exertions, when possible, by a higher motive; and where the desire of eminence is already found to prevail, to apply the incitement of emulation there, would be only to fan a flame which threatens already to burn too vehemently.

* Of which the well known anecdote of Œschines reciting the oration of his rival at Rhodes affords an apt illustration.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

TO THE

First Volume.

Note A. p. 11.

I am the more surprised at Mr. Hume's maintaining this doctrine, as in another part of his works, (his Inquiry concerning Human Understanding, Section ii.) he expressly endeavours to show that there is no idea in the human mind which is not originally derived from the senses. If all our *ideas* are deducible from sensation, it seems to me a necessary consequence that all our *affections* must be so too, since every affection implies an idea of its object. I have not, however, found in this author's writings any attempt to reconcile these inconsistent doctrines.

Note B. p. 19.

It seems a mere truism to observe that the appetites are *selfish* desires; yet this is actually denied by Mr. Stewart in the following passage, to which I would direct the attention of my readers, for the purpose of showing by what strange sophistry the doctrine which deduces all human affections from a selfish origin is sometimes opposed. "Our appetites," says he, "can, with no propriety, be called selfish, for they are directed to their respective objects as ultimate ends; and they must all have operated, in the first instance, prior to any experience of the pleasure arising from their gratification. Self-love, too, is often sacrificed to appetite, when we indulge ourselves in an imme-

diate enjoyment, which we know is likely to be attended with hurtful consequences." (Stewart's Outlines of Moral Philosophy. Part ii. ch. i. sec. ii.)—"They are directed to their respective objects as ultimate ends."—Does Mr. Stewart, then, mean to assert that food is naturally an object of desire, independently of the relief which it affords from the uneasy sensations of hunger; and that if there had been no such uneasy sensations, and no pleasure in the act of eating, food would still have been desired and sought for its own sake? If so, I can only express my entire dissent from a doctrine, which, though it cannot be disproved by actual experiment, is at variance with the plainest principles of human nature. "And they must all," he continues, "have operated, in the first instance, prior to any experience of the pleasure arising from their gratification." Yes; but not prior to the experience of certain uneasy sensations which the objects of the appetite are capable of removing. When first the new-born infant utters the cry of hunger, it cannot be supposed to have any idea of the means of satisfying its want; so that its appetite is not the desire of food, but merely the desire of escaping from pain. It is guided to the source of its nourishment by others, and the act of sucking, in its first exercise, is merely the effect of animal irritation, or what Hartley would call an *automatic* motion. It is not till after further experience has informed the infant of the means of removing its uneasy feelings, that the appetite for food can be said to be fully formed. In the last sentence of the passage above quoted, Mr. Stewart has strangely departed from the ordinary usage of language, in restricting the term *self-love* to that enlightened regard to individual happiness which looks beyond the gratification of the present moment, and takes account of distant consequences. Surely there is a blind and mistaken, as well as an enlightened and judicious self-love; and if the term *selfish* can with propriety be applied, as both etymology and usage allow, to one whose attention is exclusively occupied by his own immediate pleasures and pains, the new-born infant, who feels no other impulse than that of appetite, is altogether a selfish being. But according to Mr. Stewart's usage of the term, the new-born infant, the blindest slave of appetite, is less selfish than the man whose more

enlightened judgment prescribes some bounds to his indulgence; and the brute whose bodily appetites are entirely uncontrolled by reason, partakes in no degree of the selfishness of human nature !!

Note C. p. 39.

"How feeble," observes Mr. Stewart, "are the emotions produced by the liveliest conception of modern Italy, to what the poet felt, when amidst the ruins of Rome,

> He drew th' inspiring breath of ancient arts,
> ——— And trod the sacred walks,
> *Where at each step imagination burns !"*
>
> Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind.
> Ch. v. p. i. s. i.

"Distant as we are," says another writer, "from those lands which in the studies of our boyhood, endeared and consecrated by so many remembrances, were to us almost like the very country of our birth, it is scarcely possible to think of ancient Rome or Greece, without mingling, with an interest more than passion, in the very ages of their glory. Some name or exploit instantly occurs to our mind, which, even in the faintness of our conception, is sufficient to transport us, for some few moments, from the scene of duller things around. But when we tread on the soil itself,—when, as Cicero says, speaking of Athens, "Quocunque ingredimur, in aliquam historiam vestigium ponimus,"—all which history has made dear to us is renewed in our very eyes. There are visionary forms around us, which make the land on which we tread, not the country that is, but the country that has been. We see again the very groves of Academus;

> "And Plato's self
> Seems half emerging from his olive bowers,
> To gather round him all th' Athenian sons
> Of wisdom."
>
> *Brown's Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind.*
> Lecture xxxviii.

Note D. p. 58.

The faculties of sensation, in their first exercise, are necessarily rude and undistinguishing; incapable of analysing complex

impressions, or of discriminating between such as resemble one another, and observant only of the broader features of the objects presented to them. The power of more correct perception, the power of distinguishing the nicer varieties and relations of colour, form, and sound, is only the slowly-acquired result of long experience. If then the mere exercise of the senses of sight and hearing be agreeable, this implies the agreeableness of that mode of exercise which is appropriate to their existing state whether of imperfection or improvement. Now the appropriate exercise of improved vision consists in attending to those nicer distinctions of colour, and in observing those several varieties and relations of figure, which the rude unpractised sense is incapable of perceiving. This seems necessarily to imply a preference of delicate to glaring colours, and a peculiar aptness to receive pleasure from a certain mixture and contrast of these with one another. It implies, also, not less necessarily, a fondness for regular forms, as alone exhibiting that relation of parts, which the improved sense is now capable of perceiving. The same principle is applicable also, in a certain degree, to the beauty of sounds. Music undoubtedly derives its principal charm from association, that is, from its being expressive of certain feelings or passions of the mind. But there is much music which is expressive of no particular feeling, and which is nevertheless agreeable. This can only be, because those nicer varieties and gradations, and those more complicated combinations of sound which constitute music, are naturally gratifying to the organ in its improved state. The restriction of our pleasure to that particular succession, and that particular combination of sounds which the laws of music require, can only be ascribed to something not yet ascertained in the structure of the organ itself.

Note E. p. 60.

The following passage so well illustrates these observations, that I make no apology for quoting it at length—

> "How oft upon yon eminence our pace
> Has slackened to a pause, and we have borne
> The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew;

While admiration, feeding at the eye,
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.
Thence with what pleasure have we just discern'd
The distant plough slow moving, and beside
His lab'ring team, that swerved not from the track,
The sturdy swain diminished to a boy!
Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course
Delighted. There, fast rooted in their bank,
Stand, never overlooked, our fav'rite elms,
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;
While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,
That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,
The sloping land recedes into the clouds;
Displaying on its varied side the grace
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tow'r,
Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
Just undulates upon the listening ear;
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages, remote."

Cowper's Task. Book I.

NOTE F. p. 63.

But in a picture the cottage is accounted a more beautiful object than the mansion. True; but it is the very circumstance of being in a picture which makes all the difference. The objects which are most beautiful in reality, are not always the most pleasing in imitation. An elegant mansion, with its straight lines, sharp angles, and perfect symmetry, is not considered a good subject for a picture, because it allows no scope for the skill of imitation. To imitate nature is obviously a higher effort of art, than to imitate other productions of art; and therefore it is, that the rude scenes of nature, and objects which bear the fewest marks of art, have always been accounted the fittest subjects for the painter's pencil. The painter and those who are conversant with paintings regard the scenes of nature with a taste peculiar to themselves, and are determined in their sentiments of the beautiful, not so much by the perception of *utility*,

as by the consideration of what would *look well in a picture.* Hence the epithet *Picturesque,* on which see Knight's Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste. Ch. ii. § 15—25.

NOTE G. p. 65.

Even in works of mere ornament, where no utility is either intended or expected, something like this process of thought may still by a careful scrutiny be detected. In all productions of art, where we know that a choice has been made, we naturally look for some *sufficient reason* for that choice, and dislike the appearance of caprice or chance. And as irregularity is the usual indication of caprice or chance, we expect some attention to symmetry and uniformity even in merely ornamental works. (See Stewart's Philosophical Essays. Essay on the Beautiful. Ch. ii.) A consideration more subtle even than this sometimes determines our sentiments of beauty or deformity. It is observed by Lord Kames, that a parallelogram whose sides are nearly equal, is less beautiful than one whose sides differ in greater proportion, *because the former appears like an unsuccessful attempt towards a square.* (See Kames's Elements of Criticism. Ch. iii.) The observation may appear somewhat fanciful; but it cannot be denied that our sentiments of beauty or deformity often arise from considerations equally slight and impalpable.

NOTE H. p. 67.

Many obvious exceptions to these general remarks will occur to the reader's mind, as the ant, the bee, the beaver, and many other animals, including the whole tribe of birds, which construct their dwellings, or lay by their stock of food, with a sagacity which seems to vie with that of man. In most of these cases, however, it would perhaps be found, that the animal is led to this apparent providence by some immediate gratification which it finds in the actions alluded to. But be this as it may, the observations in the text will still be allowed to be generally correct.

NOTE K. p. 81.

The following extracts from Dr. Crichton's "Inquiry into the

Nature and Origin of Mental Derangement," though far from being satisfactory, will suffice to explain the allusion to physical causes. A more minute discussion of such a subject would be obviously unsuitable to the design of the present treatise.

"All the actions of the male parent which are conducive to the preservation of the young offspring, are voluntary ones, taking the expression in a physiological light; but in the female parent an involuntary action commences as soon as the child is born, on the continuance and healthy state of which, the life and well-being of the infant in a great measure depends: I allude to the secretion of milk.

"The greater number of the involuntary actions of men, as well as of other animals, is carried on without any consciousness of what is going forward. The various parts are endowed with a principle of action, called irritability, which is independent of mind, and by which they are thrown into their natural actions as long as the natural stimuli are regularly applied to them."

Although we have not any consciousness of the involuntary actions themselves, while they continue in a state of health, yet as the stimuli which support them are all derived, directly or indirectly, from without us, and as these stimuli must be procured by voluntary exertions, so we are urged to obtain them by very powerful feelings. These feelings constitute the great fountain from which a vast number, not only of our desires and aversions, but also of our passions arise." * * * *

"It has been already observed, that man does not seem to be urged by any corporeal feelings to the preservation of the offspring. In woman, however, there is a very painful one arising from the distention of the breasts, in the relieving themselves from which they experience much pleasure. It is on this account that the love which the mother has for the young offspring is, in general, much greater than that of the male parent."

Book iii. *ch.* i.

More complete and satisfactory information on this subject, though blended unfortunately with highly pernicious doctrines, will be found in "Rapports du Physique et du Moral de l'Homme," par P. J. G. Cabanis. Cinquième Mémoire.

NOTE L. p. 110.

"If man is an object of so much attention to man, engaged in the ordinary occurrences of life, how much more does he excite his curiosity and interest, when placed in extraordinary situations of difficulty and distress. It cannot be any pleasure we receive from the sufferings of a fellow creature which attracts such multitudes of people to a public execution, though it is the horror we conceive for such a spectacle that keeps so many more away. To see a human being bearing himself up under such circumstances, or struggling with the terrible apprehensions which such a situation impresses, must be the powerful incentive that makes us press forward to behold what we shrink from, and wait with trembling expectation for what we dread. For though few at such a spectacle can get near enough to distinguish the expression of face, or the minute part of a criminal's behaviour, yet from a considerable distance will they eagerly mark whether he steps firmly, whether the motions of his body denote agitation or calmness; and if the wind do but ruffle his garment, they will even from that change upon the distant outline of his figure read some expression connected with his dreadful situation. Though there is a greater proportion of people in whom this strong curiosity will be overcome by other dispositions and motives, though there are many more who will stay from such a sight, than will go to it; yet there are very few who will not be eager to converse with a person who has beheld it, and to learn very minutely every circumstance connected with it, except the very act itself of inflicting death. To lift up the roof of his dungeon, like the Diable Boiteux, and look upon the criminal the night before he suffers, in his still hours of privacy, when all that disguise is removed, which is imposed by respect for the opinion of others, the strong motive by which even the lowest and wickedest of men still continue to be actuated, would present an object to the mind of every person not withheld from it by great timidity of character, more powerfully attractive than almost any other."

Introductory Discourse to Miss Baillie's Plays on the Passions.

NOTE M. p. 116.

Quod autem tributum est bono viro et grato, in eo, cum ex

ipso fructus est, tum etiam ex cæteris: temeritate enim remota, gratissima est liberalitas; *eoque eam studiosius plerique laudant, quod, summi cujusque bonitas commune perfugium est omnium.* Danda igitur opera est, ut iis beneficiis quam plurimos afficiamus, quorum memoria liberis posterisque prodatur, ut iis ingratis esse non liceat: omnes enim immemorem beneficii oderunt; *eamque injuriam in deterrenda liberalitate sibi etiam fieri; eumque, qui faciat, communem hostem tenuiorum putant.*

Cicero de Officiis. Lib. ii. *c.* 18.

Note N. p. 125.

"Were it possible," observes Dr. Smith, "that a human creature could grow up to manhood in some solitary place, without any communication with his own species, he would no more think of his own character, of the propriety or demerit of his own sentiments and conduct, of the beauty or deformity of his own mind, than of the beauty or deformity of his own face. All these are objects which he cannot easily see; which naturally he does not look at; and with regard to which he is provided with no mirror which can present them to his view. Bring him into society, and he is immediately provided with the mirror which he wanted before. It is placed in the countenance and behaviour of those he lives with, which always mark when they enter into, and when they disapprove of, his sentiments; and it is here that he first views the propriety and impropriety of his own passions, the beauty and deformity of his own mind. To a man who from his birth was a stranger to society, the objects of his passions, the external objects which either pleased or hurt him, would occupy his whole attention. The passions themselves, the desires or aversions, the joys or sorrows, which those objects excited, though of all things the most immediately present to him, could scarcely ever be the objects of his thoughts. The idea of them could never interest him so much as to call upon his attentive consideration. The consideration of his joy could excite in him no new joy, nor that of his sorrow any new sorrow, though the consideration of the causes of those passions might often excite both. Bring him into society, and all his own passions will immediately become the causes of new passions. He will observe

that mankind approve of some of them, and are disgusted by others. He will be elevated in the one case, and cast down in the other; his desires and aversions, his joys and sorrows, will now often become the causes of new desires and new aversions, new joys and new sorrows; they will now, therefore, interest him deeply, and often call upon his most attentive consideration."

Theory of Moral Sentiments. Part iii. *ch.* i.

NOTE O. p. 130.

"We are pleased not only with praise, but with having done what is praiseworthy. We are pleased to think that we have rendered ourselves the natural objects of approbation, though no approbation should ever actually be bestowed upon us: and we are mortified to reflect that we have justly merited the blame of those we live with, though that sentiment should never actually be exerted against us. The man who is conscious to himself that he has actually observed those measures of conduct which experience informs him are generally agreeable, reflects with satisfaction on the propriety of his own behaviour. When he views it in the light in which the impartial spectator would view it, he thoroughly enters into all the motives which influenced it. He looks back upon every part of it with pleasure and approbation, and though mankind should never be acquainted with what he has done, he regards himself, not so much according to the light in which they actually regard him, as according to that in which they would regard him, if they were better informed. He anticipates the applause and admiration which in this case would be bestowed upon him, and he applauds and admires himself by sympathy with sentiments, which do not indeed actually take place, but which the ignorance of the public alone hinders from taking place, which he knows are the natural and ordinary effects of such conduct, *which his imagination strongly connects with it, and which he has acquired a habit of conceiving as something that naturally and in propriety ought to follow from it.* Men have voluntarily thrown away life to acquire after death a renown which they could no longer enjoy. Their imagination, in the mean time, anticipated that fame which was in future times to be bestowed upon them. Those applauses which they were never

to hear rung in their ears; the thoughts of that admiration, whose effects they were never to feel, played about their hearts, banished from their breasts the strongest of all natural fears, and transported them to perform actions which seem almost beyond the reach of human nature. *But in point of reality there is surely no great difference between that approbation which is not to be bestowed till we can no longer enjoy it, and that which, indeed, is never to be bestowed, but which would be bestowed, if the world was ever made to understand properly the real circumstances of our behaviour.* If the one often produces such violent effects, we cannot wonder that the other should always be highly regarded,"

Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments. Part iii. *ch.* ii.

NOTE P. p. 139.

No term in mental science has been more strangely and inconsistently applied than this of *simple ideas,* an instance of which may be pointed out in the works of that generally clear and accurate writer Locke. He arranges all the ideas of the human mind under two great classes, Simple and Complex. Under the former of these he ranks ideas the most dissimilar that can well be imagined; for what subjects of thought or knowledge are more remote in their nature from one another, than the impressions of sense, such as a particular sound, taste, or odour, and the abstract ideas of Power, Existence, Space, Extension, Duration, Infinity?—those being the most *particular* of all objects of knowledge, while these are among the most *general* ideas which enter into the human mind;—yet all, according to Mr. Locke, are simple ideas, received either by sensation, or reflection, or both. If the term *simple* have any reference to the process of the mind in the acquirement of its ideas, it cannot with the least propriety be applied to any general or abstract idea. For the fact is, that, in using any general term with a proper understanding of its meaning, the mind does not rest upon any single conception, but glances with rapidity over a number of conceptions. General terms are such as apply to a class of objects; and before such terms can be fully understood, a variety of the objects to which they are applicable, must have been presented to the mind, and

be, partially at least, reviewed in its memory. Strictly speaking, indeed, we cannot justly be said to have any general ideas; that is, we have no single conception corresponding to any general term. The word *man*, for instance, is a general term, denoting a certain class of animals. It includes no particular size, no particular age, no particular colour, no circumstances of any kind but such as are common to the whole class. But the mind, it is evident, can form no such indeterminate conception. The image or idea, if there be only one, which is connected in our minds with the word *man*, is always particular, and includes many particular circumstances of size, age, features, dress, and colour. It is true, we may vary our conception, and that with great rapidity. In an instant of time our thoughts may glance over various images of men; and the old, the young, the tall, the short, the rich, the poor, the enlightened sage, the ignorant rustic, the fair European, the sable African, the tawny Indian, may pass in review before our mental vision; but no *single* conception which enters into our mind can possibly be so general in its nature, as not to include some particular circumstances which the general term does not imply. It is only by means of this mental review of particulars, that any general term can be fully understood, and the child whose experience is limited to a few particulars, can evidently have but a very imperfect understanding of the most ordinary general terms. And as for those comprehensive words which Locke has mentioned as instances of simple ideas, such as Power, Existence, Space, Extension, Duration, Infinity, the mind of a child is utterly incapable of understanding them at all, nor can they be fully understood till reason has attained to some maturity, and the powers of abstraction and generalization have long been exercised on terms of a more familiar nature. If this mental review of particulars be necessary for properly understanding the term *Man*, it must be still more necessary for properly understanding the more extensive term *Animal*, which requires a survey in the mind of the various tribes of beasts, birds, fishes, insects, in addition to man. The same must be the process of thought which accompanies the term *Organized life*, which includes, and therefore requires to be partially surveyed, the various orders of vegetables in addition to animals. And if we

then mount up to the most general and comprehensive of all terms, namely, Being or Existence, which includes animals, vegetables, stones, and every other thing in nature, together with those higher orders of intelligent beings which we believe to exist in other worlds, and that one greatest Being, whose nature so far surpasses our utmost powers of conception, when we ascend, I say, from terms of less extensive signification, to this most general and comprehensive of all words, with what reason can it be maintained that the process of thought which is necessary for fully understanding the former, is not, equally at least, necessary for fully understanding the latter? or with what propriety can the idea attached to the word existence be called a *simple idea,* unless we apply the same denomination to the idea of animal, man, brute, vegetable, and of every other less general term? Locke and many other metaphysical writers seem not to have been sufficiently aware of the wide difference which there is between *exemplifying* a general term, and *having the idea or ideas which that general term expresses.* Those very general ideas which have been mentioned, may be exemplified, it is true, in the simplest objects of perception: but it is not surely to be supposed that all to whom these objects of perception are presented, contemplate them in that abstract point of view. The plaything which the child holds in his hand, may be considered by the metaphysician as implying the idea of *existence,* because it exists; of *unity,* because it is one; of *extension,* because it is extended; of *duration,* because it continues to be perceived through successive periods of time. But surely it will not be affirmed that these very abstract notions occur to the child's mind. Such a doctrine, however, appears to be implied in a passage of Dr. Price's Review of the Principal Questions in Morals, (p. 44) where he attempts to show how, from the contemplation of one very simple object, such as a cubic inch of matter, an intelligent being, without any other means of knowledge, may acquire the ideas of entity, possibility, and actual existence; of space, duration, divisibility, causation; of contact, impulse, momentum, and all the laws of motion; of number, proportion, magnitude, and all the truths relating to them;—how, in short, from this single subject of inquiry, the mind might

learn not only the elements and principles, but the main part of the whole body of science. The same strange doctrine is maintained by Mr. Stewart, with the supposition of even more limited means of knowledge than those supposed by Dr. Price. For he supposes "a being formed in every other respect like man, but possessed of no senses except those of hearing and smelling," and maintains that such a being, from a single sensation excited in his mind, might not only be led to the exercise of many of his most important faculties, but might acquire the abstract, or as he calls them, the *simple* notions of number, duration, cause and effect, and of personal identity. (See Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind. Ch. 1. Sec. 4.) It is obvious that a single sensation involves what these abstract terms express, and may be so considered by one who has learned their use and meaning; but to a mind devoid of all other experience, and *altogether unaccustomed to those habits of thought which arise from the use of language*, it could not possibly appear in the same abstract light.

Note Q. p. 157.

"When first I turned my thoughts," says Paley, "to moral speculations, an air of mystery seemed to hang over the whole subject; which arose, I believe, from hence, that I supposed, with many authors whom I had read, that to be *obliged* to do a thing, was very different from being *induced* only to do it; and that the obligation to practise virtue, to do what is right, just, &c. was quite another thing, and of another kind, than the obligation which a soldier is under to obey his officer, a servant his master; or any of the civil and ordinary obligations of human life. Whereas from what has been said it appears, that moral obligation is like all other obligations; and that *obligation* is nothing more than an inducement of sufficient strength, and resulting in some way from the command of another." (Paley's Moral Philosophy. Book ii. ch. iii.) To this explanation of the term *obligation* I see no reason to object, except in so far as it represents the command of another as necessarily implied in the inducement. In ordinary usage, indeed, the terms *obligation* and *inducement* are by no means synonymous: the latter being applied to motives of a weaker kind, when a choice of several

objects or courses has been presented, and where only our own convenience or interest has been taken into the account; the former implying a moral necessity of acting in a certain manner, by reason either of the rights of others which we cannot disregard, or of the necessary connexion between ends already chosen and the means indispensable for their accomplishment. Thus the motive which influences us in the choice of a house, or a book, or a companion, is called an inducement; but the motive which leads us to pay our debts, to fulfil our engagements, or to observe such regimen as is necessary for the preservation of health, is called an *obligation*. In the present inquiry, however, the term 'obligation' is taken in the wider sense of *motive generally*; for to ask what is the ground of moral obligation, is simply to ask what is the reason, the argument, the motive, which may be urged universally in favour of virtue, and which in its own nature is final and decisive.

NOTE R. p. 169.

" Un homme éclairé sur son intérêt, ne se permettroit pas même un crime caché, soit par la crainte de contracter une habitude honteuse qui le trahiroit tôt ou tard, soit parce que des secrets à dérober aux regards pénétrans des hommes laissent dans le cœur un fond d' inquiétude qui corrompt tous les plaisirs. Tout ce qu' il pourroit acquérir aux dépens de sa sécurité ne la vaudroit pas, et s' il est jaloux de l'estime des hommes, le meilleur garant qu' il puisse en avoir, c' est la sienne propre."

Traités de Legislation, par J. Bentham.
Principes de Legislation. Chapitre xii.

NOTE S. p. 171.

" If we examine into the motives which rouse men to activity in civilized life, and prompt them to persevere in fatiguing exertions of their ingenuity or strength, we shall find that they arise chiefly from acquired wants and appetites. These are numerous and importunate; they keep the mind in perpetual agitation, and, in order to gratify them, invention must be always on the stretch, and industry must be incessantly employed. But the desires of simple nature are few, and where a favourable climate

yields almost spontaneously what suffices to gratify them, they scarcely stir the soul, or excite any violent emotion. Hence the people of several tribes in America waste their life in a listless indolence. To be free from occupation, seems to be all the enjoyment towards which they aspire. They will continue whole days stretched out in their hammocks, or seated on the earth in perfect idleness, without changing their posture, or raising their eyes from the ground, or uttering a single word.

"Such is their aversion to labour, that neither the hope of future good, nor the apprehension of future evil, can surmount it. They appear equally indifferent to both, discovering little solicitude, and taking no precautions to avoid the one, or to secure the other. The cravings of hunger may rouse them; but as they devour with little distinction, whatever will appease its instinctive demands, the exertions which these occasion are of short duration. Destitute of ardour, as well as variety of desire, they feel not the force of those powerful springs which give vigour to the movements of the mind, and urge the patient hand of industry to persevere in its efforts. Man, in some parts of America, appears in a form so rude, that we can discover no effects of his activity, and the principle of understanding which should direct it, seems hardly to be unfolded. Like the other animals, he has no fixed residence; he has erected no habitation to shelter him from the inclemency of the weather; he has taken no measures for securing certain subsistence; he neither sows nor reaps; but roams about as led in search of the plants and fruits which the earth brings forth in succession; and in quest of the game which he kills in the forests, or of the fish which he catches in the rivers."

Robertson's History of America. Book iv.

NOTE T. p. 175.

"It was in the choice of Cyprian," says Gibbon, "either to die a martyr, or to live an apostate, but on that choice depended the alternative of honour or infamy. Could we suppose the Bishop of Carthage had employed the profession of the Christian faith only as the instrument of his avarice or ambition, it was still incumbent on him to support the character which he had

assumed; and if he possessed the smallest degree of manly fortitude, rather to expose himself to the most cruel tortures, than by a single act to exchange the reputation of a whole life, for the abhorrence of his Christian brethren, and for the contempt of the Gentile world."

History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Ch. xvi.

"It is worthy of observing," says Lord Bacon, "that there is no passion in the mind of man so weak, but it mates and masters the fear of death: and therefore death is no such terrible enemy, when a man hath so many attendants about him that can win the combat of him. Revenge triumphs over death; love slights it; honour aspireth to it; grief flieth to it; fear preoccupieth it." &c.

Bacon's Essays. Essay ii.

NOTE U. p. 179.

"I have hitherto," says this writer, in a paper on the subject of Envy, "I have hitherto avoided that dangerous and empirical morality, which cures one vice by means of another. But envy is so base and detestable, so vile in its original, and so pernicious in its effects, that the predominance of almost any other quality is to be preferred. It is one of those lawless enemies of society against which poisoned arrows may be honestly used. Let it, therefore, be constantly remembered, that whoever envies another confesses his superiority; and let those be reformed by their pride who have lost their virtue." (Rambler. No. 183.) The argument in this particular instance certainly strikes us as exceptionable; but it is exceptionable more from its weakness and inconsistency, than on any other ground. It is evidently not at all calculated to answer the intended purpose; for to engage a man's pride against certain conduct on the ground of its being a virtual admission of another's superiority, is rather to inflame than to allay his envy. Envy is in fact a species of pride, and to talk of arming pride against envy, is little less absurd than to talk of arming envy against itself.

Note X. p. 186.

(Erroneously referred to as Note U.)

The first illustration which Paley gives of his rule, is that of bestowing alms upon a beggar whose distress is doubtful, and where we are not sure that our charity is well applied, on the ground of cherishing, or avoiding to impair, our feelings of compassion. I have omitted mentioning this illustration, because it appears to me ill-chosen. If there be a doubt, as he supposes, "whether the distress be real," "whether it be of public advantage to admit such applications, whether it be not to encourage idleness and vagrancy," &c.; if there be a doubt, in short, whether mischief or good will result from the act in question, it is surely our duty, even on the ground of cultivating the habit of benevolence, to withhold our bounty till we are assured that no harm at least will result from bestowing it.

See Paley's Moral Philosophy. Book I. *ch.* vii.

Note Y. p. 214.

"Prætermittendæ autem defensionis, deserendique officii, plures solent esse causæ. Nam aut inimicitias, aut laborem, aut sumptus suscipere nolunt; aut etiam negligentia, pigritia, inertia, aut suis studiis quibusdam occupationibusve sic impediuntur, ut eos quos tutari debeant, desertos esse patiantur. Itaque videndum est, ne non satis id, quod apud Platonem est in philosophos dictum; quod in veri investigatione versentur, quodque ea, quæ plerique vehementer expetunt, de quibus inter se digladiari solent, contemnant, et pro nihilo ducant, propterea justos esse: nam, dum alterum justitiæ genus assequuntur, inferenda ne cui noceant injuria, in alterum incidunt; discendi enim studio impediti, quos tueri debeant, deserunt. Itaque eos ad rempublicam ne accessuros quidem putant, nisi coactos: æquius autem erat id voluntate fieri; nam hoc ipsum ita justum est, quod recte fit, si est voluntarium. Sunt etiam, qui aut studio rei familiaris tuendæ, aut odio quodam hominum, suum se negotium agere dicant, ne facere cuiquam videantur injuriam: qui altero injustitiæ genere vacant, in alterum incurrunt: deserunt enim vitæ societatem, quia nihil conferunt in eam studii, nihil operæ, nihil facultatum."

Cicero de Officiis. Lib. i. *cap.* ix.

NOTE Z. p. 218.

"Every person who has been accustomed to subscribe for the support of what are commonly called charities, should ask himself this question. 'However humane the motive, am I doing any real good by so expending my money? or am I not doing more harm than good?' In either case, indeed, harm is done; because, even if the money so applied should do no mischief, yet, if it did no good, harm would be done by the waste. But in order to enable him to answer the question, he must reflect, that no proposition is more undeniably true than this, that the existence of a known and regular provision for the poor, whether in the ordinary form of pensions, doles, gratuities, clothing, firing, &c., or in the shape of maintenance for poor children, in whole, or only in part, as clothing, has the inevitable tendency to bring forward not only as many objects as the provision will maintain, but a far greater number. The immediate consequence of such provisions is, to promote idleness and poverty beyond what the funds can relieve: the continued and known existence of the provisions trains up a race of paupers; and a provision for children, especially, promotes improvident marriages, and increases the population by the addition of paupers. It is therefore a sacred duty which every one owes to the community, to refrain from giving contributions to begin such funds; and if he has already become a yearly contributor, it is equally his duty to withdraw his assistance, unless one condition is complied with,—namely, that no new objects shall be taken into the establishment, but that those only who at present belong to it shall be maintained; so that the mischief may be terminated within a limited time, and nothing unfair or harsh done towards those who had previously depended on its funds. I remember the time when money given to beggars was supposed to be well bestowed—a notion now exploded; yet even this exercise of benevolence is less mischievous than the support of regular establishments for the increase of paupers." *Practical Observations upon the Education of the People, &c. by H. Brougham, Esq. M. P. F. R. S. See also an article on Charitable Institutions in the Westminster Review. No.* iii.

NOTE A a. p. 220.

"Betwixt argument and authority," says Paley, "(I mean that authority which flows from voluntary respect, and attends upon sanctity and disinterestedness of character) something may be done, amongst the lower orders of mankind, towards the regulation of their conduct, and the satisfaction of their thoughts. This office belongs to the ministers of religion; or rather, *whoever undertakes it, becomes a minister of religion.* The inferior clergy, who are nearly upon a level with the common sort of their parishioners, and who on that account gain an easier admission to their society and confidence, have in this respect more in their power than their superiors: the discreet use of this power constitutes one of the most respectable functions of human nature."

Paley's Moral Philosophy. Book III. *pt.* ii. *ch.* iv.

NOTE B b. p. 224.

Mr. Brougham, in that admirable pamphlet which has been already quoted in a former note, has expressed his opinion, which is grounded, he says, on actual observation of Mr. Fellenberg's establishment in Switzerland, "that a high degree of intellectual refinement and a taste for the pleasures of speculation, without any view to a particular employment, may be united with a life of hard labour, even in its most humble branches, and may both prove its solace and its guide."

Practical Observations on the Education of the People. P. 27.

NOTE C c. p. 260.

Strange that an author of so much good sense as Paley did not perceive how entirely this principle is at variance with that latitude in falsehood, which he allows even in the chapter from which the passage quoted in the text is extracted, and still more with his artful casuistry on the subject of subscription to articles of religion! How can it be maintained that a servant's *denying* his master is not meant to deceive, and does not tend to impair the servant's integrity?—What need is there that an advocate, pleading a bad cause, should assert his belief of its justice? And with respect to a prisoner falsely declaring himself not guilty,

though we cannot wonder at the frequency of the practice, considering the usual character of those who are placed in that situation, is it right for the speculative moralist to assert that the denial of a crime, which has actually been committed, is no aggravation of the criminal's guilt? and do we not justly admire the candour and honesty sometimes, though so rarely, displayed by the contrite offender, who steadily refuses, against the persuasions of his judges, the possible advantage of a false plea? These instances, however, of Paley's inconsistency are trifling compared with his strange doctrine on the subject of subscription to the thirty-nine articles. Granting that the *animus imponentis* is, as he asserts, the proper rule of interpretation, can it be believed that the legislature of the 13th Elizabeth intended no more than merely to exclude from offices in the church abettors of popery, Anabaptists, and Puritans? If so, all who come not under any of these denominations, that is, Jews, Unitarians, Deists, Mahometans, Idolaters, Atheists, may with a safe conscience sign the articles in question. However difficult it may be to conceive how the framers of these articles could "expect the consent of ten thousand men, and that in perpetual succession, not to one controverted proposition, but to many hundreds," it is far more incredible that they should have intended to throw open the doors of the church so widely as this interpretation supposes, or that they should have chosen to express themselves in language so totally remote from their real meaning.—It is painful to notice this jesuitical morality in a writer to whom the world is unquestionably indebted for much important truth conveyed in a peculiarly clear and forcible manner.

On the subject of veracity I would strongly recommend to my readers, particularly to my *young* readers, a little work of Mrs. Opie's, entitled "Illustrations of Lying." A fastidious taste may perhaps object to her tales as somewhat "o'erstepping the modesty of nature," by their improbable incidents and exaggerated characters, but the spirit and tendency of the work is truly excellent.

NOTE D d. p. 300.

The plan of a cummunity of possessions would afford a very

insufficient security against these evils; since it would take away the strongest stimulus to exertion. This has been proved by actual experiment; for in the colony of Virginia the attempt was made to establish a society upon that plan, and the result is thus related by Dr. Robertson in his History of America. "A society destitute of the first advantages resulting from the social union, was not formed to prosper. Industry, when not excited by the idea of property in what was acquired by its own efforts, made no vigorous exertion. The head had no inducement to contrive, nor the hand to labour. The idle and improvident trusted entirely to what was issued from the common store; the assiduity even of the sober and attentive relaxed, when they perceived that others were to reap the fruit of their toil; and it was computed that the united industry of the colony did not accomplish as much work in a week as might have been performed in a day, if each individual had laboured on his own account."

Robertson's History of America. Book IX.

NOTE E e. p. 335.

"Like the hypochondriac, who imagined himself placed in the centre of a globe of glass, whose preservation was essential to his existence, the proud man, whose idea of self is far extended, walks through the busy crowd in perpetual anxiety and apprehension, and receives thousands of imaginary wounds from those who are not aware of touching him. The great seem to press on him from above, the vulgar from beneath, and his companions and equals on all sides threaten the imaginary circle with destruction. Hence he is embroiled in perpetual quarrels, or devoured by perpetual chagrin; having no toleration but for the few who observe that respectful distance which interferes not with the limits to which the idea of self extends."

Miss Hamilton's Popular Essays. Vol. 1. *p.* 38.

NOTE F f. p. 346.

"Nothing is more disagreeable or irksome to the company, than to hear a man either praising or condemning himself; for both proceed from the same motive, vanity. * * I have known many people take shame to themselves, and, with a modest con-

trition, confess themselves guilty of most of the cardinal virtues. They have such a weakness in their nature, that they cannot help being too much moved with the misfortunes and miseries of their fellow creatures, which they feel perhaps more, but, at least, as much as they do their own. This generosity, they are sensible is imprudence; for they are apt to carry it too far, from the weak, the irresistible beneficence of their nature. They are possibly too jealous of their honour, too irascible when they think it is touched; and this proceeds from their unhappy warm constitution, which makes them too sensible upon that point; and so, possibly, with respect to all the virtues. A poor trick, and a wretched instance of human vanity, and what defeats its own purpose."

Lord Chesterfield's Letters on the Art of Pleasing, contained in his Miscellaneous Works. Letter XI.

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